‘Our words are very little’: the untold story of the Tasmanian Karen

Rebekah Jane Brown (Burgess) BA (Hons.)

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Declarations

Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee approved the research associated with this study on 12 January 2015 (Full Ethics Ref: H0014292).

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright

Signed: R.Brown

Date: 30 April 2018

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Abstract

Karen refugees from Burma via Thailand are model migrants, providing much-needed population and an extraordinary economic boost to Australian regional towns. But while Karens also boost numbers in (mostly) Baptist congregations across the nation, less is known about the spiritual dimensions of resettlement and the human contribution of religious resettlers. Migrant research and policy directives prioritise economic participation, inequality and inclusion as resettlement outcomes. These align with legitimate concerns but poorly account for settlement as a process. Economic optics can neglect the social, emotional and spiritual dimensions of settlement, and the agency of refugees, while migrant optics neglect the impact on, and role of receiving communities (Neumann 2016). Given the religiosity of Australia's refugees a curious blank spot persists in migrant research around behaviours in socio-religious civic spaces. This study investigates a local church as a site of cross-cultural interaction, and the lived experiences of Christian Karen resettlers. This sustained participatory observation constitutes a friendship ethnography, akin to Fine's (2003) peopled ethnography and Tillman-Healy's (2003) friendship as method. Reciprocal relationships, language exchange (learning and teaching) and a traditional conversational style *la pa ti dor deh* (tea and talking) are adapted as methods to overcome language barriers, and as research beneficence. This study investigates firstly, how religious space sharing and rituals can foster civic participation, and how everyday gestures and objects communicate meaning. Secondly, it explicates how Karen 'do' resettlement, including the role of religious ritual in home-building and cultural maintenance. While cross-cultural interactions can be 'hopeful' encounters of care here, discomforts and misrecognition also feature. So, while dominant cultural norms persist inclusion and exclusion co-exist in this socio-religious space, Karens 'found' a place to worship and call home. This study finds church spaces not only 'welcome' refugees, but foster reciprocity and recognition, 'cushion' culture shock, and have integrative potential for receiving and resettler communities.

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Introduction

This study investigates a local church as a site of cross-cultural interaction, and the lived experience of settling for Christian Karen (refugees from Burma, via Thailand). Given the religiosity of Australia's refugee-background migrants, a curious blank spot persists in the research literature around behaviours in socio religious micro spaces. This study offers both reformed methods for examining resettler practices and multicultural interactions, and a recalibrated picture of resettlement in a local setting. This study shows how religious space-sharing and rituals can foster civic participation but are not free of discomforts and exclusions. The study shows how cross-cultural interactions can be hopeful encounters of care that not only welcome refugees but foster reciprocity and recognition both within and outside the church. Karen resettlers' use of religious spaces and practices 'cushion' culture shock and are significant home-building and cultural maintenance efforts. Local socio-religious spaces are 'contact zones' (Wise 2005, 2009) consequential for peoples' lives and relations (Fine 2003: 53). The practices and participations in these spaces constitute a 'micro-moral economy' (Wise 2009: 26) and have integrative potential for both receiving and resettler communities.

Flows of refugees are a prominent and poignant feature of the contemporary global landscape, and many people now have personal encounters with refugees through camp visits, trips overseas, and meeting resettlers. This study centres on personal encounters with refugee-background Karen resettled to Tasmania who attend a local church and have formed their own congregation. I first encountered Karens in 2013 when I travelled to Mae La camp on the Thai-Burma border (TBB). I worked as an English teacher for a month, travelling from Mae Sot each day as camp visitors are heavily regulated by Thai officials. Since that time Burma's political situation and the plight of ethnic groups within and around the nation's borders has been an object of my interest and prayers. Upon hearing a group of about 200 Karens had been resettled to Tasmania since 2010, I applied for the PhD program in order to look more closely at this part of their resettlement journey. In 2014, I relocated cities to around the corner from the local church where many Karen families gather each week and I have attended services there for over four years. The church community at TBC is an 'Anglo' congregation (actually a mix of older European, and Australian born), joined by Karen resettler families over a ten-year span. This research unfolded iteratively, and over four years, following the 'ins' that were afforded by the nature of public worship in a local church, and

personal relationships I built over time. The project was ethnographic, but I detail this study by reference to a friendship ethnography (my term). This study is not an ethnographic approach added to an otherwise short-duration qualitative project (see Travers and Putt 2013), but a sustained ethnography incorporating anthropological traditions such as immersive participatory observation and language-learning. This study sits between a personal and a peopled ethnography (following Fine 2003, see Methodology). Among the many things we do not know about refugee groups, and resettler Karen, several things stood out at the onset of this study.

Firstly, given the characteristics and history of Karens, it is unknown how this group are settling to a suburban area in this rural State. For Karens, fleeing the Burma army's violent oppression has profoundly reshaped their lives, along with life in refugee camps in neighbouring Thailand, which have become 'home', and then birthplace, over five decades. Refugee journeys are diverse, and refugee arrivals are contiguous. Any refugee 'community' will be a diverse group of individuals, from different villages, and different Karen language groups. Members of a single family will have lived a different number of years in Burma, or have been born outside the country, had different displacement experiences, and would have arrived at a refugee camp and been resettled at different life stages. Resettled communities experience inflows and outflows, so there may always be very new arrivals among a long-resettled group. Services in Australia are doing well to support new arrivals, but as settlement occurs in stages and is contiguous, formal and informal support may not meet continued and changing needs. As for the Tasmanian chapter, many humanitarian entrants resettled to this small State begin a process of refugee-initiated chain migration through family reunion (see Julian et al 1997; Okhovat 2017)[1]. Tasmania is seen as a 'good' place to settle, offering more personable services and community interactions, and a 'simpler' lifestyle than metropolitan areas (Julian et al 1997: xiii). However, many such groups leave, seeking larger communities and employment opportunities elsewhere - including one of the most significant resettled

[1] In Australia, entry to and permanent residency for non-citizens is regulated within annual government quotas for the Migration Program (places for people on skilled, business and family visas), and the Refugee and Humanitarian Program (places for refugees, mostly referred to Australia by the UNHCR, and special humanitarian program (SHP) places). The SHP places are for persons classified as outside their country of origin and subject to discrimination and violation of human rights. SHP places are called 'sponsored' or family reunion visas, however use narrower definitions of 'family' than the UNHCR, pass significant relocation and resettlement costs onto 'proposers', and prolong waits as quotas are a fraction of demand (Okhovat et al 2017).

'communities', the Hmong, from Laos (see Eldridge 2008; *Mercury* 4-5 July 2015; Julian et al 1997). Significant numbers of El Salvadorians, Bosnians, and Vietnamese settlers have also left and the various of African nationals have also begun to drift away from the State (see Fletcher 2007; Julian et al 1997). Community size and employment opportunities are implicated in 'success' and staying in the State, however refugee 'participation' is particularly impacted by language, education and discrimination (Hugo 2014; Julian et al 1997) and this is compounded in Tasmania by a low overall employment participation rate[2]. As a first generation 'still settling', these refugees are likely to take a generation to build capacity and match Australian-born labour participation rates (Hugo 2014). Features of resettlement in Tasmania are likely related to suburban living in a rural State – as research with Australian and US Karens shows that urban and regional settlements differ (see Gilhooly and Lee 2017). Conversely, 'rural communities can offer a less traumatic starting point' for refugees from farming backgrounds (Gilhooly and Lee 2017: 38). Reports of Karens settled in Australia, particularly in regard to work, social and economic participation in rural towns, position the Karen as 'model migrants' (see Chapter 1 – *Resettled life*). The Karen in rural Nhill (central Victoria), for instance, are much-needed population and workforce for the local chicken processor, adding an estimated 41 million to the local economy (Catherine Scarth pers. com. 2017; ABC 2015). While urban Karens in America have better employment and training opportunities they have joined an underclass and struggle to maintain culture and intergenerational harmony; conversely resettlement to rural areas offer better informal and social supports, and better housing opportunities. Karens in Georgia, for instance, contribute by filling long-empty homes and employment positions (Gilhooly and Lee 2017), plus home-purchase among rural Karens in Australia is higher than average (Wilding and Nunn 2016). Yet, resettlement is not only an economic issue. In rural Georgia (US) Karens have shifted the local community profile to better reflect global diversity, and the resident schoolchildren and factory workers are exposed to lives and cultures beyond the familiar (Gilhooly and Lee 2017). Resettlement is social, emotional and relational (Hiruy 2009; Fozdar and Hartley 2014).

[2] *Mercury* TasWeekend (4-5 July 2015) notes a lack of employment in the State, and larger ethnic communities and facilities elsewhere in Australia as reasons migrant, working and reproductive-age groups leave Tasmania – of 18-24 year olds in the State, only 22% refugee-born (compared to 68% Australian-born) have full or part-time work (see Julian et al 1997). Tasmania's population aging is accelerated by interstate migration, and the State misses out on the 'rejuvenating effect' of overseas migration seen overall in Australia (see Denney 2018).

Secondly, this study examines how these Karens reshape and maintain their culture in a new social setting, and how this impacts the local community, asking what part the receiving community, particularly the local church, its space and people, has played in the resettlement of these Karens. For smaller ethnic groups and those in urban areas, assimilation and ritualization of ethnic identity is almost inevitable (see Gans 1962, 1979, 2009). Fast integration and culture loss, however, can have negative effects on wellbeing and community dynamics, such as successful parenting (see Chapter 1 Part 3 *Resettled life*). Yet much migrant research and reporting is around service provision in the early stages, and political and economic participation later. In short, migrant research and media constructions are 'problem oriented' (ABC 2013; Bottomley 1984; Gale 2004; Neumann 2016; Pickering 2001; Strang and Ager 2010: 593; see Chapter 2). The field is also immigrant oriented, neglecting to investigate changes and challenges in receiving communities (Hage 1998; Neumann 2016). Migrants are more religious than Australian-born of Australian-born parents, and churches are key players in community-led settlement support - religion is a central feature of Australia's cultural diversity (Bouma 2006; Pew Forum Org 2009). But while the role of faith and faith communities are significant to lived experience and settlement, settlement service providers, policy makers and academics seldom darken the door of a church. Yet churches, other community organisations, and individuals play a lead role in resettlement, and earlier ethnic entrants – and their congregations - cushion culture shock for later entrants (see Gilhooly and Lee 2017). What seems taken for granted or missed is that churches (especially ethnic churches) are central to this cushioning (see for example Burrell 2006). Many churches in Australia are now ethnic congregations, and multicultural places. For example, in Australian, Karen leaders are almost all also religious leaders (see SE Victoria MRC 2011). Karens have joined existing churches and planted new ones in every area of Australia where they have resettled. Karens have been involved with building a Buddhist temple in Bendigo (Wilding and Nunn 2016), and other groups are saving to build their own Christian church spaces (see Bennett 2015). Space sharing in socio-religious spaces is different to other micro publics or 'contexts of encounter' (Wise in Neal 2015: 993) like parks and libraries (cf Williamson 2015), or increasingly secular spaces like universities (see Bouma 2006). Unlike many civic spaces, such as markets or malls and food halls (cf Wise 2010), this space is not oriented towards consumption (see Sack 1992, cited in Cresswell 2014: 38) but to public gathering and communal outcomes (Amin 2008: 7). In the space of a local church a relatively small, relatively stable but not homogenous group gather to enact a set of rituals and habits that afford relationships that are 'consequential' in each-others' lives

(Fine 2003: 53). The space is useful to produce belonging and reproduce 'place' (Cresswell 2014; Goffman 1983, 1969; Rangkla 2013; Knibbe 2013) for those formerly displaced.

The questions orienting this research, then, are around how these Karens are settling, and what role has religion, culture and the church and its members played in the action. This study reports on the resettlement *process* in a local setting, rather than examining *outcomes* within a policy framework. This inquiry follows an empirical turn in social research with an immersive, sensual approach demonstrated by the examination of 'everyday multiculture' by Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham (Wise and Velayutham 2009; see Chapter 2). This approach is characterised by personal observation (Neil 2015) and a tight focus in on the routines and practices[3] of actors in a space (Fine 2003; Goffman 1969; Creswell 2014) that befits an investigation of the social and cultural life of a resettled community of faith.

The argument that threads through this thesis is twofold. Firstly, to do with space. The 'ethics of care' in this space totals a decade of continuous resettlement support, which evidences the importance of socio-religious spaces and encounters for refugee help and sociality. Socio-religious micro-spaces that feature everyday multicultural interaction are also social settings that foster civic participation. Space-sharing can lead to reciprocity and exchange which have potential to build and invoke bridging capitals (between-group resources and relations). That is, churches can be moral economic arenas (Wise in Neal 2015: 993). The actors in this space operate in a convivial arena (Wise 2009; Wise and Velayutham 2016) such that even excluded and marginalised groups can become 'solvent' (my term) in moral-economic terms. However, inclusion and exclusions co-exist in these spaces which are not free of the dominant culture, but do give certain 'space' to and for cultural 'others'. Secondly, to do with resettler 'solvency'. Refugee-background Christian (and non-Christian) Karen are able to participate in meaningful ways in this space, but also act to build value exchanges beyond the space which build on transnational and local bonds. While the potential for bridging capital remains capped by prevailing cultural and social conditions, bonding capital allows resettlers to provide a critical cultural 'cushion' for family and newer arrivals. Thus, ethno-religious ritual constitutes place-making and works against 'stretch' (Massey 1994, cited in

[3] This connection between space and practice uses Cresswell's (2014: 62) definition that 'things we do (practice) creates space that is always being produced and reproduced in a mobile, rather than static way'. Following Cresswell (2014), 'place' and ritual are primary concerns, with issues of representation (also features of the mobilities paradigm, see Swe 2013), as secondary considerations.

Hutchinson 2000) to create 'space' and belonging. That is, these religious resettlers are busy and active in alternative and micro-moral economies (Wise 2009: 26). That is, they 'do' not only cultural maintenance but substantial resettlement and integration work, and this study demonstrates how this is facilitated by local Christian people and spaces.

In order to de-identify this relatively small group in a local church context, I refer to the church as TFC – Tasmanian Family Church. I refer to *these* Karen, or Tasmanian Karen, to distinguish them from mainland groups (elsewhere in Australia). Individuals have been aggregated and conflated as many characters, for example leaders, would otherwise be re-identifiable. I expand on this strategy in the methods. I refer to Karen people by their familial name in relation to myself (aged 38) – a much older woman is *Pi* (grandmother), a much older man *Pu* (grandfather), a man or woman just a little older than myself and with children are *Par Di* (uncle) or *Mu Guah* (auntie). Women my age and young women are *Naw*, men *Jaw*. Young girls are *Paw Mu*, young boys *Paw Kwa*. There are many men and women in the community who are trained teachers or pastors (they completed Bible courses in the camps) and the community refers to them as *Therah* (for men) or *Therah Mu* (for women). For clarity in the writing I do not italicise names except to consistently refer to a specific person (a *Therah*, or *Naw*) where more than one appears in the narrative. Among the Tasmanian Karen there are two *Therah* who have official functions so I use a mix of these Karen familial and official terms to collapse individuals and maximise anonymity – for instance not all trained teachers are leaders, some teachers are also grandmothers, and the Sunday School and language teachers are a mix of trained teachers and parents. The Karen language used here is Sgaw (pronounced Skaw, but by speakers as G'nyaw), the most common of about 18 different Karen languages. Throughout the thesis words that were spoken in Sgaw are anglicised using phonetic approximations rather than the script (see script in Appendix H). Words spoken in Sgaw are italicised, to give a sense of where and how this language is used in interactions. Aside from Karen participants, in formal feedback sessions and casual conversations I learnt a lot from non-Karen members of the congregation. I refer to these non-Karen as members, 'regulars', church people or locals, and have collapsed church leaders into these generic categories. A small number of people who were key actors in Karen resettlement and support, and also informants in the research, I call transversals (from the work of Amanda Wise, see Wise 2009; Chapter 2 and Chapter 6). Migrants of a refugee-background often object to the label refugee (Kumsa 2006), and the term is ambiguous (see Chapter 2). So, this thesis uses the term 'resettler' (my term) to acknowledge the diversity of

lived experiences and agentic capacity of these migrants /refugee-background Tasmanians, and to give a sense of the resettlement stage (see Chapter 2 – *Resettlement discourses*).

Chapter synopses

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first four establish a background for the thesis but do enfold selected findings about the Tasmanian Karen. Chapter one is both historical and empirical. It outlines the history of the Karen people by reference to village life, unrest in Burma, the situation in refugee camps along the TBB, and Karens in Australian settlement. Chapter two flags relevant social theory. This chapter moves outside stock issues in migration research around identity and integration to take a stance in theories of the middle range (Merton 1968); from Gans on migration 'stage', social and civic space in resettler lives, and the symbolic nature of social interaction, and the solvency (bonding and bridging capitals) of religious resettlers. Chapters three and four outline the methodology and methods. The methodology compares friendship ethnography to Fine's (2003) personal and peopled ethnography, addresses theory-generation, and includes methodological findings (reflexive analysis of inductive design, and participatory ethnographic methods). The methods chapter gives details about language proficiency and exchange, the friendship and other methods, and how the analysis was a reflective process facilitated by sustained (iterative) observation and writing as sense-making. The fifth chapter gives findings but is also analytical and reflexive, introducing ethnographic scenes (vignettes) as a literary and methodological device through which findings are presented, accompanied by a first level of analysis. This chapter is in two parts; the first considers multicultural interactions in the church space, the second the resettlement of the Tasmanian Karen. The sixth and final chapter discusses themes across the findings in relation to multicultural conviviality in a socio-religious micro space and proposes how the ethics of care, the exchanges and exclusions in this space can be seen as 'hopeful', and implicated in 'successful' settlement. A further section discusses religious civic spaces, and the role of religion and ritual as resources for cultural continuity and as a 'cushion' for culture shock for these migrants. A final section discusses how the settlement of the Karen can be better understood through the lived realities and pragmatic imperatives of an initial generation of resettlers, and gives implications and recommendations for policy. This thesis contains a substantive, a reflexive (methodological) and an evaluative conclusion. The substantive conclusion revisits the findings. The reflexive section examines the positive implications and the limitations of the research design and considers the ethical and methodological dimensions of sustained (friendship) ethnography. The evaluative conclusion recapitulates the implications, and limitations of friendship ethnography, and the ethics and affordances of exchange for social research.

Ch 1 Background: History and biography of the Karen people

> Our hearts are saturated with hearing news of fighting, human rights abuses and atrocities committed without discrimination of age, sex, race and religion. Please help stop the civil war in Burma and help restore peace and stability in Burma…
>
> – Rev. Simon, Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Pastor (cited in Rogers 2004: 10).

Part 1. Burma life

Burma, Burman and Burmese are English approximations of the colloquial Burmese for the speakers, their country and language, Ba-ma, while Myan-ma is the formal pronunciation (Dalby 1998: 103). Despite international adoption of 'Myanmar' - a misspelling of the formal name - pro-democratic individuals and groups refer to the nation as 'Burma' to protest the undemocratic nature of the name change under the military junta (see Rogers 2004: 29: Milbrandt 2012: 1)[4]. Ethnic Bamar (also 'Burmans' or less accurately but commonly 'Burmese') make up the majority of the population (68%), the elite, and almost all government and other positions of power[5], but Burma is ethnically diverse[6]. The 2010 census, the first in over 40 years, recorded 135 different groups (see Saning 2013; Appendix B), and these categorisations were the subject of passionate debate. The Karen are the second largest group of ethnic nationals in Burma, with Shan and Mon similarly large[7]. A potted

[4] Burma was the name used by the independence movement prior to independence from Britain in 1948 but after the military coup of 1988 the regime decreed Myanmar and Rangoon (was Yangon) become the official names (Milbrandt 2012). This was seen by many as illegitimate, divisive and an attempt to Burmanise the culture and nation (Milbrandt 2012). While the UN and signatories including Australia now recognise the name change, participants in this research continue to use Burma so I follow their lead.

[5] 'Democracy' in Burma is undermined by laws introduced by the regime, for example the 1990 election results (almost total victory to the democratic opposition) were ignored, and prior to the 2010 election (the first in two decades) laws were established to prohibit people with jail terms to run for office - eliminating key democratic party members including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and thousands of other political prisoners (Callahan 2010; MacLean 2010). Daw Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest for a total of 15 years in contradiction to international and even martial law that allowed detention without trial for up to five years (Callahan 2010; MacLean 2010).

[6] Research papers, local government reports and community profiles including those written with Karens often use the umbrella term 'Burmese' or 'Burmese community' to refer to what is a mix of different ethnic and language groups (see for example Ferber et al 2013; Schweitzer et al 2001; Henderson and Kendell 2011; Banki 2006; Logan City Council 2016).

[7] Karens are a collection of peoples with around 18 separate and mutually incomprehensible languages (Dalby 1998). Burma's population is estimated at 50 million, ethnic groups at 40 per cent, but counting ethnic groups is fraught with logistical and political issues including coercion and fear around identity cards – and the 2010 census was the first since 1983 (Saning 2013).

history is presented next, to give a sense of the political climate in Burma and the implications for ethnic nationals, with the focus narrowing to the Karen people, their religious and village life, displacement, refugee camp life, and resettlement experiences.

Burma, a bloodied political history

The history of Burma, from colonisation through new constitutions during six decades of military rule is a story of an ongoing civil war, an epic struggle for democracy and freedom from an intrusive, punitive, self-serving state (see Appendix A). The Burma government treats citizens as potential enemies and takes arbitrary and punitive action against them with the assistance of a hugely expanded military force and the use of open intimidation and imprisonment as a deterrent (Callahan 2010). The leadership structure in Burma 'the regime' is a military junta. Local and global illegitimacy, activism, embargos and sanctions have not wrested political and military control from the *tatmadaw* (Burmese for 'armed forces') - the Generals and military police (Callahan 2010). The junta has survived by controlling the economy, polity and military in a 'climate of fear' (Rogers 2004: 25) characterised by dictatorship and brutality, suppression of free press and speech, strident anti-democracy sentiment, power struggles and superstition[8]. These abuses have left a legacy of fear, want, and uncertainty among citizens, especially the hundreds of smaller ethnic nationalities in Burma. Officials have considerable power over the lives of the populace including in Karen villages (Rajah 2008). Government-led military offensives and operations against insurgents have been particularly heavy and ongoing in Karen State, in Kachin and in northern Shan states to this day (Amnesty International 2017), in addition to recent escalations in the Rohyingya refugee crisis (see Appendix A, B). The actions of the regime position ethnic army resistance and offensives as anti-insurgency, but rich sources of evidence show that the army avoid KNLA bases and attack defenceless villages (see Phan 2010: 325; Rogers 2004; Reuters 2018, The Guardian 2018). Milbrandt (2012) uses detailed records of attacks over the nine years to 2011 to show how battalion-sized operations sweep though villages and IDP areas in 2-4 week cycles, using machine-gun fire and mortars on approach then entering to loot and destroy homes, often burning down entire villages. Villagers are beaten, raped,

[8] Mary Callahan argues Burma's political history can be presented as an unhelpful binary, with the military junta positioned as evil tyrant against the 'pro-democratic' and their leaders (including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi) and ethnic nationals as a force for good which is simplistic – opposition to the junta is not singular but arises from a range of interpretations which now includes non-NLD factions, transnational activists and global media voices (Callahan 2010). Callahan notes that 'media coverage of the domestic struggle between the junta and the NLD has constantly overshadowed the dilemma of Burma's ethnic minorities and armed insurgencies in the country's border areas' (2010: 17)

tortured, chased or shot on sight and landmines are laid to deny the people and the resistance access to homes and resources (Milbrandt 2012). These raids can be described as crimes against humanity (Rogers 2004 :25-6), and patterns of forced relocation (including human trafficking) and 'counterinsurgency' are demonstrably related to resource extraction (including jems, timber, opium and methamphetamines), and the economic interests of the regime (McLean 2010). Over the months to January 2018 an initial 75 thousand Rohyingya, a persecuted and stateless Muslim minority in northern Rakhine state, became refugees - over 870, 000 eventually fled their homes to Bangladesh as Buddhist mobs and security forces killed and brutalised villagers, looting and burning down whole villages (Reuters 2018, The Guardian 2018).

Burma's first election in two decades was held in 2010. Burma has shifted to a nominally civilian government (Burma Link 2015), yet there is only a passing waft of democracy as the military drafted constitution allows the junta to retain parliamentary seats, appoint leaders, and remain independent of civilian oversight (Roberts 2004; Amnesty International 2017). The human rights situation in Burma has not resolved with regard to political prisoners, and ethnic nations - and despite a ceasefire agreement (NCA), armed conflicts continue between the Burma Army and ethnic nationals (Amnesty International 2017; The Irrawaddy 2017c). Ethnic groups, historically self-reliant, continue to fight as hopes fade that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the icon of the democratic struggle, will be able to effect dramatic change. Calls for trade sanctions against Myanmar are muffled by powerful regional and global demands for resources (Washington Post 2018, The Guardian 2018; Callahan 2010). Democracy is not inevitable as neither 'universal revulsion', damaged reputation, fractured oppositions, or economic crisis is likely to undermine the military leadership structure (Callahan 2010). Furthermore, the mix of global trade demand, local governance and ceasefire have incited in a development 'turn' where control over resource–rich, former insurgent areas has been decentralised to field battalions (MacLean 2010). The Burma army is now required to 'self-fund' so have begun to appropriate ethnic-operated mines and other assets, drive out, extort and enslave local villagers (MacLean 2010).

The few signs of hope for Burma's people are the relaxing of migration laws, and more transport options which give the poor options to move for work and send remittances home to improve their situation (Callahan 2010). More widespread knowledge of rights abuses through on-the ground humanitarian observers, mobile coverage, international media

coverage and domestic access to media has a modest regulatory effect (see Callahan 2010). Improved media and information allows people to better guess the de facto rules of the political game in order to stay off the state radar and survive (see Callahan 2010). Resettlement offers a small percentage of refugees opportunities for further education, work, and even family reunions that are not possible in many refugee camps.

This brief overview of Burma's political timeline is covered in more detail in Appendix A (*Burma: a bloodied political history*). In any story of Burma, the bloodied bid for independence, the involvement in WWII, the military dictatorship and the corrupt and crippling Burmese Way to Socialism, and prodigious details of political party machinations can easily overshadow the realities of ordinary people and their lives (Callahan 2010). Ethnic nationals have experienced ongoing brutal repression and human rights abuses, and large-scale armed clashes between the Bama army and ethnic nationals continue to this day. But, in keeping with the findings and tone of this thesis, this history has been removed to an appendix in order to emphasise the traditional, cultural and contemporary lived experiences of ethnic nationals, particularly Karens.

Ethnic nationals, religious groups the centre of conflict

As this brief history documents, the Burma government hostility towards people does not spare the ethnic Burman majority, and has a deep impact on those ethnic groups who live in the bamboo villages that lie within the deep arc of mountainous jungle which follows the land-locked borders of Burma (see Appendix B Burma/Myanmar detail map). Conflict areas follow this inverted horse-shoe shape, curving from the south-western border with Bangladesh, north-west with India, north-east with China, east to Laos and around to the longest, eastern to south-eastern border with Thailand (see Appendix B: BurmaLink infographic and map; Appendix C: TBB refugee and IDP camps). The hill tribes and minority ethnic groups are considered 'backward' by those in central Burma (predominantly ethnic Bamar, elites and government officials) – the distance between the groups is both social and geographic. When General Than Shwe (SPDC head of state, 1992-2011) declared martial law ethnic languages were outlawed, especially in the central areas. Burmese is the official language and national lingua franca to this day but the limits of government control remain. For example, primary education may be conducted in ethnic languages (Dalby 1998: 103). There are many independent groups among the ethnic minorities, some have signed ceasefire agreements and others are in co-optation with the government (see Callahan 2010; Saning 2013). This fractioning of Burma's ethnic groups,

added to existing religious, ethnic and language differences, is cited in as preventing a unity that may otherwise have defeated a common enemy and brought about a revolution (Rogers 2004). Burma's border regions are extensively militarised, as in addition to army presence, there are sizeable armed forces among the larger ethnic groups (Callahan 2010)[9]. The work of Christian Karens at all levels of the resistance is notable, with pastors, missionaries, professors and diplomats joining the ranks and campaigns for freedom (Rogers 2004). According to MacLean (2010) around 200 regime field battalions were deployed on the eastern border last decade. These compete to exploit (and extort) limited local resources due to regime policy introduced in the early 90s that requires military divisions to collect their own operating expenses, leading to extortion in the form of 'rents (such as extra-legal taxes and protection fees) in addition to a percentage of the commodities' (MacLean 2010: 43-44).

The deep divisions and oppression in Burma centre around ethnicity and religion (see Rogers 2004: 32, 37, 84-7). The major religion is Buddhism, but animism is widespread, and Christianity and Islam are significant among the smaller ethnic groups (Rogers 2004). Burma has one of the worst records for religious freedom, and religion is used as a tool of oppression and causes division between ethnic groups (Rogers 2004: 28, 32, 37, 84-7). While Christians have been targeted, Muslim and Buddhist groups have also faced ongoing political oppression in a climate where religion is used to divide (Rogers 2004: 32) or blamed for political dissent (Callahan 2010). However, political and religious freedom (government oppression) are conflated in Burma, with much of the evidence anecdotal or by implication. For instance, in the 60s Christian Kachin protested the decision to make Buddhism the state religion (Rogers 2004)[10]. The humanitarian crisis and domestic response to Rohingya refugees shows that the persecution of Muslims is a status quo around which even Daw Aung San Suu Kyi appears to

[9] Callahan gives estimates that the Wa have 20,000–30,000 soldiers, the Kokang a force of 4,000 and some larger ethnic groups have received financial support from international interests – 'the Kokang, Kachin, and Wa have ties with the Chinese while the Karen receive support from western Christian groups. They use this as leverage to bargain with the junta in maintaining their autonomy, or move away from strife and allow land takeovers (Rajah 2008 citing Lonsdale n.d; see Ekeh and Smith (2007), cited in Callahan 2010:18).

[10] Government propaganda during 12 years of martial law claimed that Christianity, and other democratic and human rights organisations, were tools of Western imperialism designed to divide the country. Some claim around 50 churches were shut while Burma's largest pagoda was built in 2001 -the Shwedagon pagoda's huge golden Buddha is said to resemble General Than Shwe. Prime Minister from 2007 to 2011, the general was re-elected President in 2012, in contradiction to the 2008 military-drafted constitution. Yet the Shewdagon pagoda, a popular public protest site, was shut by military police in the aftermath of the 2008 cyclone (see Appendix A), purportedly so soldiers could collect gems shaken from the spire during the humanitarian crisis.

remain impassive (Beech 2017).

While Karens are mostly Buddhist in Burma, Christians in Burma are likely to be Karen - about 40% of Karens are thought to identify as Christians (Rogers 2004: 31-2), and of the Christians, most are Sgaw Karens (Rangkla 2013). When Baptist missionaries first came to Burma in the 18th centaury they found they were expected - the Karen have a legend that a white brother would come with a holy book (Rogers 2004). Judson is a popular name among Karen Christians to this day, after Adoniram Judson, founder of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society and instigator of printing in Burma in the early nineteenth century; he was responsible for the first major Burmese-English dictionary (Dalby 1998: 103; see Wade 1883). Missionaries devised a script based on Burmese characters, for both Pwo and Sgaw Karen, whose ancient script had been lost (Dalby 1998: 304; see Wade1883; Gilmore 1898). Much aid and anti-insurgent activity in Karen State though the 90s was conducted by the Free Burma Rangers, who would pray the Burma army intelligence would be confused, and reported answered prayers for protection in the jungle (see Rogers 2004: 181ff). Furthermore, a good proportion of Karen maintain animist practices. This is considered tradition rather than religion, referred to as worshiping or 'following' spirits (Phan 2010; Rangkla 2013; Rogers 2004: 196). While historical divisions exist between the Karen and Burmese, Buddhist Karens are culturally and geographically closer to the Burmese (Dalby 1998: 304). For example, Pwo Karen in the borderlands are often Buddhist, speak Burmese and prefer to chant in Burmese (Rangkla 2013). In 1994, a Karen military faction, led by a Buddhist monk, split from the Christian Karen National Union (KNU) insurgents and formed the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), aligning with the Burmese to defeat the KNU and gain control over much of Karen State (Rangkla 2013).

Pwa g'nyaw (the people)

Karen (kah-REN) is an English adaptation of *Karreng* (Mon) or *Karieng* (Thai), or *Kayin* (Burmese) (Dalby 1998: 305). There are perhaps six million speakers of Karen languages and they make up the largest ethnic group in east central Burma (see Dalby 1989: 304; see Saning 2013)[11]. Karens are the second largest ethnic group in Burma - so dislike the term minority, identifying as a nation with their own flag, and government structure (Rogers 2004: 30). The

[11] *The Irrawaddy* (21 February 2018) reported that the 2014 census findings on ethnic populations is still awaiting release, adding to the controversy over ethnic classification and naming on the census forms.

Karen National Association (later KNU) was formed by Baptist, animist and Buddhist Karen in 1881, in a bid for an independent Karen state. Karen State (maps use the Burmese 'Kayin State' see Appendix B) was established in 1952 (Dalby 1998:305). There are over 18 subgroups of Karen, each with different languages and histories. *Sgaw* is the largest at perhaps two million, these are mostly hill-dwellers in Karen State, where living conditions and Burmese language is the lowest (Rajah 2008). *Pwo* is also over a million (from lowland Mon-speaking areas). While *Pwo* and *Sgaw* speakers are geographically close they are linguistically different, but collectively referred to as White Karen (Burmese *Kayin byu*) because of the colour of their traditional dress (Dalby 1998: 304). *Pwo* and *Sgaw* are from Mon State and Kayin State respectively (see Appendix B), and those in the western regions of these States, and those closer to central Burma are more likely to speak Burmese. *Pa-o* (Black Karen) are from eastern Shan State; the *Kaya* (Burmese *Kayin ni* 'Red Karen'), are referred to in English as Karenni or Karenni-speaking Kayah, a smaller ethnic group from eastern Kayah State (see Rogers 2004: 30, Dalby 1998: 304; see Appendix B). Hundreds of thousands of ethnic minorities live as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burma, or in the borderlands of Thailand. There are about three million migrant workers in Thailand, around 497, 000 living as IDPs in Burma, and 110, 000 as refugees in camps on the TBB (Burma Link 2015; Saning 2013; UNHCR 2015; The Border Consortium 2015; see Appendix B: BurmaLink conflict infographic).

Part 2 Displaced life

In the next section, to build a biographical account of village life, displacement and life beyond Burma's border, I use first-hand accounts, including from my own visit to Mae La, and the published memoirs of ethnic women (Phan 2010, Law-Yone 2011). These biographical details counterbalance reports from outsiders and ethnographers (Rogers 2004; Rajah 2008; Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011). In addition, accounts are difficult to obtain from jungle areas and mostly consist of anecdotal and biographical data, with official reports and Burma-government sources unreliable, outdated, or lacking details of everyday life. Rather than requesting and publishing stories from Tasmanian Karens, I use details from Zoya Phan's biographical novel. I was given a copy of this book by a young Tasmanian Karen who told me 'her story is like my story – just the same'. International co-ordinator of the Burma Campaign UK, Zoya Phan writes a compelling account of displacements from her village, refugee camp life, and eventual resettlement to the UK (Phan 2010). Phan –

unusually named after a young Russian partisan executed for opposing the Nazis in WWII - narrates the ever-encroaching conflict and the fear but hope of return to her home village, even amidst the first attack and flight into the jungle. A daughter of a respected leader (*Pahdoh*) and pro-democracy speaker (*Pahdoh* Mahn Sha Lah Phan) Zoya and her family flee on foot many times and twice by car to six different jungle locations and Karen villages inside Burma before foot soldier and air raid attacks force relocation, including to three different refugee camps (Mae Ra Moe, Noe Poe - also called Nu Po - and Mae La). This remarkable story by a young Karen woman, whose school years are punctuated by attacks by the Burma Army, imparts the personal and particular to the following account.

Village life

In the bamboo villages, set in the mountainous jungle of Burma, life centres on the rice harvest, with productive vegetable gardens, fruit trees and chickens adding flavours to rice, the central food. Soaked and split bamboo is used to make houses on stilts, and the family rice store, firewood, animals and the family latrine are sited underneath. A broad leaf is stitched together in panels to form a waterproof roofing. During *dut htaw hee koh* (the time to cover the house), the village would collect and sew broad leaves into panels to replace an old and brittle roof, until each roof was replaced. During the work on each house the family would feed the workers pumpkin and chicken curry; 'such communal activities were the social glue that held the village together' (Phan 2010: 38). When the rice harvest is announced, families enlist help from others in rotation, and feed the labourers pumpkin and chicken curry (Phan 2010: 53). Rice is the staple food, such that a common Karen greeting is *ner aw may?* ([did] you eat rice?), intended as a polite question or invitation depending on context. Crops of rice (*bu)* are planted and harvested with help from other villagers, but weeding and other tasks are completed by family members. Unhulled rice (*hu thah*) is pounded by hand, often by children, and the bamboo rice store is covered by a dung plaster (Phan 2010: 34-5). Cooked rice (*may*) is eaten three times a day, and on special occasions rice is fried (*may jaw*), or roasted in bamboo sections (Phan 2010: 39). Meat is only eaten once or twice a month, with pork a delicacy connected to animist marriage rituals (see Phan 2010: 38; Rajah 2008). Gardens are common, even extensive, incorporating fish ponds and ducks alongside eggplants and beans and pineapple, and fruit trees of mango, lemon, banana and plums, plus coconut groves near the villages (see Phan 2010: 82ff; Rajah 2008, Phan 2010). Many natural foods are collected; mushrooms, locusts and young bamboo shoots, frogs, snails, prawns and crabs (Phan 2010: 44-6). Eels are a favourite (Law-Yone 2011), but

even leaches were eaten in war time (Rogers 2004).

A bamboo ladder is used to access a home and doors are never locked, only closed to keep chickens and their dung out, as Karen culture is one of honesty (Phan 2010: 27). The chickens kept under the house would attract snakes, but Zoya's grandfather would hear and catch them, saying any egg-eating snake was good to eat. Bamboo houses are open inside, with a hearth and perhaps two closed off sections as bedrooms (see Appendix D). Zoya's parents shared with her younger brother and she shared a room with her sister. The family adopted an older boy from the next village which had no school, so he could be educated. Say Say lived with them as a brother, working, fetching, and carrying baby brother. The cooking fire produced more smoke than warmth, so when it was cold they would play-fight *Ta ker met su* (a local martial art) to warm up (Phan 2010:113). Zoya owned a spare longyi, and one new pink dress, a mirror for applying *tha na ka* - a sun-protective and cosmetic whitening sap, ground on a stone from a small log of sandalwood - and some exercise books. She kept all her belongings in a carry bag near her bed.

Karen villagers often use a mix of religious practices in everyday life, and special events. Zoya's father, brought up with animist practices, was away with the resistance for her siblings' births, but was there to see her born, and so took her umbilical cord up a mountain and planted it under a tree, to give her a wide perspective (Phan 2010; see also Eldridge 2008 on Hmong birth practices). Zoya's schooling was provided by a Christian organisation, as they were seen as the best educators, but she had classmates from different villages and a range of religions. Much later, when Zoya's mother died, Buddhist monks offered prayers in the morning, Christians held a service in the afternoon and there were animist rites to shoo the spirit away into the next life (Phan 2010: 275).

Displacement

Zoya reports that when the Burma Army attacked their village 'I had to leave my bright, magical childhood behind me, as did my friends' (Phan 2010: 171). Zoya ran into the jungle with what they could carry, only to travel with hundreds of others, for weeks on foot through flooded rivers and wild animals to reach the border, pushing past more passively hostile Thai forces in order to enter a camp. When martial law was enforced in 1989, thousands of political prisoners were arrested and minority language-learning was prohibited. In the jungle, the four cuts campaign began to bite deep and up to 200, 000 Karen fled their villages

in the years to 2015 (Burma Link 2015; Appendix B). The Burma Army attacked and burned villages to the ground, terrorising and driving peoples away from crops and destroying rice stores (see Rogers 2004: 26). During the worst attacks, if villagers did not receive early warnings from KNU rangers, villagers could be held to ransom to give up 'rebels', or were shot, the women raped. The use of landmines was widespread and some were left in schools and churches to destroy those returning to salvage scarce resources. When villagers rebuilt by hand from split bamboo they rebuilt a school first, and youth would return to studies while parents laboured on, building homes. These new villages were returned to again and again by the Burma Army in the dry season, and burnt to the ground. Villagers would run into the jungle, to hide out and return, or when villages were destroyed would travel on to the relative safety of Thailand, eventually establishing large refugee camps on the border (detail from Rogers 2004; Phan 2010; Milbrandt 2012).

Family separation due to conflict - whether direct displacement or relocating to join the resistance - meant that relatives lived apart for years, in remote new villages or different camps, and perhaps were never reunited. Travel could be fatal. Where people are internally displaced (IDPs), they are largely unrecognised and unreached by the UN[12]. After completing her education, Zoya makes a journey back behind the border, to experience and document what is happening in the IDP villages. Her party face the dangers of military checkpoints and the despair of the multiply-displaced who are starving and lack even necessities such as blankets and cooking bowls. Zoya spoke to the villagers about their circumstances, but says 'of course, they didn't tell us much but we knew it for sure, for we could read it in the hopelessness in their eyes' (Phan 2010: 264). The separation of families carries deep spiritual implications for those with animist beliefs. For example, at the *aw gheh* ceremony all living members would gather at the family home - disunity and absences were considered very bad as the spirits could not be accommodated (Phan 2010: 38- 9).

Describing life displaced inside her own country, Zoya details the walking and hiding - a story of hunger, disease and drownings, attack by wild animals and innovative hygiene management in the jungle (Phan 2010). Zoya describes travelling to a place with no name where they stop under a big tree - soon firewood and natural food in the area is scarce, and

[12] The Burma army routinely blocks aid within Burma, including after their own offensives, and the widespread devastation of cyclone Nargis in 2008 (*The Guardian* 2008; see Larkin 2010 for a full account of the disaster, but prepare to weep).

she and her sister must wait until dusk provided them the privacy to wash, crouched under a bamboo pipe positioned to divert a hillside spring (Phan 2010:155). Walking on, Zoya and her family reached a camp in Thailand. Here, they heard the word 'refugee' for the first time.

Arriving at Mae Rah Moh, Zoya found the camp gave them an 'uncertain, ill-defined status', this only applied while they lived within the constraints of the fence. Reunited with her father, but leaving her grandmother and adopted brother behind, Zoya left Mae Ra Moh for New Village in a KNU vehicle. They were back behind the Burma border. The KNU had failed an attempt at political resolution with SLORC who wanted to disarm the Karen but would not agree to ceasefire, nor protect Karen from rapes, burnings and killings. Zoya's father travelled from village to village, urging the Karen to stay armed and ready, to be united as one, Karen of all ethnicities and religions against 'our enemy', the military dictatorship. But, the day of her year nine maths exam - Karen National Day - the Burma Army attacked New Village. Again, leaving behind a garden, and separated from family, Zoya makes for Mae La, hoping for the chance to complete her schooling.

TBB camps: uncertain shelter

On arriving to Mae Ra Moh, an unofficial camp (not receiving UN assistance), Zoya's father and brother are still missing but the family built their home together in time to start school in April (Phan 2010: 134[13]). This would have meant building, and establishing a garden from saved seed, was progressing during the hottest part of the season. Their eggplants and spinach supplemented rations of gritty, gluey 'broken rice', oil, salt, yellow bean powder and fish paste; vegetables were sold to buy a pot, some clothing and rare treats like sugar or prawn crackers. On arrival to camps there is little time to plan for rebuilding communities, and camps differ in their size and organisational structure. Zoya's sister had completed year ten and hoped to become a doctor, but in Mae Rah Moe further study was prohibited so Say Say's life was at a dead end and she was often confused and frustrated (Phan 2010: 167).

Almost all the people of concern in Burma are smaller ethnic groups. Most are clustered in the south-eastern region of Burma (TBB), the borderlands (Burma Link 2015; Appendix B and C). The major exceptions are the persecuted Rohingya in the south-west, and military conflict in western Chin State. Nine refugee camps sit just outside the eastern border of

[13] Any farm or jungle land in Burma and Thailand can be used to build housing, so rent - a monthly payment with no prospect of home ownership – is a foreign concept there (Gilhooly and Lee 2017).

Burma and are home to over 100, 000 refugees (The Irrawaddy 2017a; Appendix B, C). Mae La, the most central camp on the border area, is the largest. A further seven IDP camps sit inside the border. The Karen ethnic group makes up most refugees along the TBB, but Buddhist and Muslim Karen, and other ethnic groups especially Shan and Mon live in these crowded camps. Zoya's friends were scattered about artificial sections of the camp, which are set up according to blocks of arrivals rather than according to kinship. While people kept arriving after long detours around Burma Army blockades, a fence and threat of deportation by Thai officials prevented them moving out to gather firewood and natural foods (Phan 2010: 155-168). Zoya describes the Thai soldiers as 'professional looking', with boots a uniform and modern gun - a far cry from Karen resistance fighters in flip-flops carrying old rifles (Phan 2010: 155). As a young woman, Zoya is well aware these Thai police are among those who victimise refugees in the camps (see Eldridge 2008: 116; Milbrandt 2012). One day Zoya's constant fear of attack is realised - the Burma Army opened fire and captured dozens, burning Section 2 to the ground (Phan 2010: 157-8). Zoya hid in the jungle with her grandmother, her bag and some seeds only to return to see the Thai guards, paid to protect them, had abandoned their posts (Phan 2010: 157-8, 176).

Life in a refugee camp on the TBB is one of 'disequilibrium, impotence and frustration', with the sense of powerlessness arising from a lack of freedoms and opportunities (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2010). The Karen are instrumental to organisation in the camps (Rogers 2004; The Irrawaddy 2017a), and anyone with skills will volunteer to teach, with some education provided by NGO's and FBOs. Zoya learnt hygiene at Mae La, and used throw-away items for the first time - a toothbrush, and sanitary items, which they were taught to burn (Phan 2010: 163). In Zoya's life, her education was central, and she welcomed any instruction, finding a return to school each time a 'relief' (Phan 2010: 166). On my visit to Mae La (2013), higher education was still prohibited by the Thai government and leaving camps, for example to earn extra income or seek education, carried the risk of deportation as an illegal immigrant - thousands were rounded up this way, and trucked back across the border (Phan 2010: 152-3, 167, 222; see Brees 2008). Crowding and physical, cultural and emotional deprivations in these border camps can spill over into domestic violence, crime and substance abuse (KWO 2006: 14; TBBC 2007b: 29, both cited in Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011: 223). Kya Tah Ya, now a resident of Kattaning near Perth (WA) describes his seven years in a camp as boring and frightening, with too many people and not enough food, vicious fighting and sometimes 'big problem' (Arnall 2015). Anecdotally, the camps existing

restrictions, such as the prohibition of building permanent structures which necessitate the use of bamboo with leaf-rooves, and registration for rations, have been added to by a high perimeter fence, special permissions to enter or leave, armed guards at the gates, and rations-forfeit for those who choose to take work outside the camps in Thailand both legally and illegally. A view of Mae La, the largest TBB camp, is given as one such personal account.

Mae La: a travellers' view

On my visit, I experienced Mae La as a functioning, if overly large village - a common travellers' view. Mae La consisted of 90, 000 people in 2013, about equal to the population of the greater Launceston area, my Tasmanian home at the time. Sited on a steep hillside, the camp is crowded with split bamboo housing on stilts; from the road, it appears as a sea of dark brown leafy rooves appearing as one with the jungle but now enclosed by an imposing perimeter fence and guard-house complete with armed Thai police. Existing restrictions within the camps - registration for rations and the prohibition of permanent structures, necessitating the bamboo - have been added to over the years by permissions to enter or leave - hence the fencing and guards - and rations forfeit for those working outside the camp. The registration system has been particularly harsh. Zoya reached Mae La in 2004, returning to visit unofficially in 2008 - as Thai authorities were not allowing access to journalists or politicians at the time. On our 2013 visit and on subsequent visits by the team, photography was prohibited and guards are known to shout and menace passing photographers.

Education in the camps is systematic but desperately under-resourced; volunteers, low skilled teachers now on a small wage, NGOs and missionaries take most of the lessons. Schools and churches in Mae La are bamboo sheds with waist-high walls and the large brown leaves as roofing. The primary school where I took English classes was an open- sided shed with a central corridor and a series of half-walled classrooms opening to either side - not dissimilar to stables. The floor was hard-packed dirt. Each classroom had a solid rear and front wall of split bamboo, a thin blackboard hung at the front, and a large water canister with one cup sat at the back. From close to the front, all the way to the back of the classroom thickly-cut but worn-smooth timber benches and bench-seats were cramped into two rows of seven and seated 43 'grade four' students ranging in age from nine to sixteen. A few women from the community also sat in on my classes. Equipment was a plain exercise book and pencil each, and I supplied chalk, a tennis ball, balloons and markers for literacy and games – there was no curriculum. While classes were in session in this building the grade two and three class

could be heard chanting and singing, and the class behind us offered call and response that sometimes drowned out my instructions – I quickly learn to use these moments to have the class sing whatever song I'd taught them to that point. The small staff area where I took a break - bookended by a bell's clang - was smoky as here drinking water was boiled in a huge drum atop a coal fire. The young teachers broke a banana from a bunch for me and accepted any English practice I could offer in the recess, while children played outside. We crowded around their single text book of lessons, all in English. Further education was officially banned (see also Phan 2010: 167, 224), but a small group of college girls were tutored by an older Australian lady who had managed to have permission to live in the camp as a chaplain.

Some public buildings had the luxury of corrugated iron roofing, and basic amenities. The primary school had a cinder block of four squat toilets, each with a drum of water for washing. Sited atop a hill, these drums are filled by hand so an empty barrel was a risk. Houses and public buildings on stilts had bamboo entryways filled with removed shoes – a useful indicator of occupants. A water barrel stood ready for foot washing at the entry to the preschool building. Here, beyond the veranda of shoes was a large rectangular room with rounds of split bamboo for walls and thatched bamboo for the floor. This functioned as a meeting space and classroom. A section of raised floor to one end, like a stage, was the only furnishing in this entry-room (see Appendix D). A small ground-level preschool or Sunday School classroom to the right could be accessed by stairs; this was used for staff meetings and to refresh guests. They offered us luxuries; three-in-one (sweetened coffee and milk powder, made up from a thermos), and had soft drink standing ready in an Esky of ice. At the back of the preschool was a semi-open lean-to area with one long table and benches to the left, and a covered food preparation area with coal fires used for staff meals in the left outer corner. Two toilets for the centre were to the right, a pair of ceramic squat-overs side by side enclosed by a short bamboo fence, with concrete troughs beside them, serviced by a tank outside the hut. Inside the troughs floated a plastic saucepan for dipping up water to wash oneself and to flush, plus on one rough rim was a rare sight, a bar of soap. Outside in the open, the tank provided washing-up water to the women who squatted before two large bowls to soap and rinse plastic wares. I saw over thirty children when I attended the day-care during nap time one day - they were laid out like the dead, a row of little bodies the length of the meeting room, under mosquito netting. I came upon the two teachers resting in the entryway, a small bowl between them. I tried a spoonful of their sweetened milky crumble – the treat was probably a nutrition supplement.

The people I met in Mae La were mostly teachers. The English language teachers were all Karen with little training or opportunity to practice with native speakers. We met at the Pastor's house each afternoon. The Pastor's house was a simple rectangle (see Appendix D), with storage underneath but without the amenities of the school house. As I taught English the teachers told me about their lives. They received rations of coal for cooking, plus foodstuffs: rice, tinned fish, yellow bean powder, salt and vegetable oil, plus chickens provided variety. One young teacher revealed this to me, along with a need for phonics training, by saying for breakfast he had an 'ee gee gee' (his pronunciation of 'egg'). The teachers had a small wage and could buy fruit at the early-morning market near the guard-house. Later in the day just a few packaged essentials were available from open-fronted huts in this area - simple toiletries and small bags of crackers. On a walk around the camp I saw large churches and a shrine. Houses on stilts sat open, old people sat and just looked or called *Halla Ghey* (good afternoon). Banisters and bridges were hung with shirts drying on hangers. One house had an enormous pig tethered beneath. Lean chickens and sweet-natured dogs wandered the camp, and while the teachers explained they had been prevented from establishing gardens, I saw one extensive, fenced-off garden growing lush and wild on a steep slope, crammed with unidentifiable foodstuffs. A girl washed her hair at a tap, wearing a longyi tight up under her arms. Everywhere the water ran over hard-packed ground and made rivers and gutters and mud. Rubbish was beside every track and a few concrete steps had been placed on the worst slopes. Along with the occasional fuse box and tin roof these were signs of increasing permanency at Mae La. Those outside the reach or restrictions of the camps have mixed experiences of work and poverty. On this trip, based in Mae Sot, we also met a group of Karens living on a rubbish dump. They sifted out plastics for recycling and had no amenities or access to water but took off their shoes when we put down a tarp to host the children for Band-Aids and colouring-in. As we left a woman ran after us and pleaded for help to pay local police 'protection' fees. The teachers and pastors we met on the trip keep up with us on Facebook; a request came one day in 2017 to please pray - the *tatmadaw,* known for recruiting child soldiers (Rogers 2004: 237ff), had abducted a young father.

The camps are changing as Burma's peace process has moved forward - but the steady decline of international aid seems disproportionate to resettlement and repatriation activity. Repatriation seems a continuation of Thai government ambivalence and desire to divest itself of the burden of the camps (see also Eldridge 2008). Rations to the camps have been cut several times (2013, 2016, 2017), stretching to breaking already thin supplies of rice which

are allocated to 'registered' refugees - the registration ceased in 2006 so new arrivals and visitors to the camp are supported as 'ghosts' out of meagre family supplies (see also Phan 2010: 311). In April 2017, The Thai-Burma Border Consortium (TBC) cut funding to organisations like the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) who supply some of the 10, 000 community workers who support residents across the nine camps with health work, teaching, warehousing, security and program coordination (The Irrawaddy 2017a). From the late 90s and in 2011 talk of refugee repatriation became more widespread, but there is equally widespread concern that the practical and human rights situation in Burma is inadequate to allow return (Kenny and Lockwood Kenny 2011; Burma Link 2015).

Part 3 Resettled life

Karens as 'refugees' and Australia's resettlement program

The Australian Government's post-war immigration program has focused on resettling migrants and refugees into major cities. While there is no explicit Australian Government regional resettlement policy framework, a 2003 review of settlement services led to budget increases for humanitarian settlement in order to double refugee-background resettlement in regional areas (DIMA 2003, DIAC 2005, cited in McDonald et al 2008: 7). From 2004 Tasmania's North-West Coast and Launceston were recipient sites for increased settlement funding, and grants were given to ensure community support at local and state level (DIAC 2005, cited in McDonald et al 2008: 15). These changes have been driven by population and skills shortages, however regional resettlement is varied and needs further evaluation at a national, state and local level (McDonald 2008). In addition, while direct resettlement is largely initiated by the government, manufacturing, agricultural, humanitarian and faith-based organisations (FBOs) have been known to resettle groups informally (McDonald et al 2008). For example, a faith group is known to have supported Karen from Burma to relocate directly to Bendigo (McDonald et al 2008). The availability of employment in agriculture and manufacturing has driven spontaneous relocations (secondary migration) of refugees to smaller regions (McDonald et al 2008; see section below, *Tasmania's migrant communities*). Quieter rural settings, larger homes and work with fruit growers and abattoirs, for example, are attractive to refugees who also often find urban living problematic (McDonald et al 2008; see section *Tasmania's migrant communities*). These dispersal patterns present opportunities for regional Australia and are a counterpoint to existing challenges such as migrant concentrations in Sydney and Melbourne (see CVWPM 2004).

Resettlement to third countries, for Karens, appears to arise from 'push' factors that culminate in the limitations of camp life, and a continuation of the fragmenting forces of displacement (cf Velayutham and Wise 2005). Fractured communities and disrupted lives must be rebuilt but Karens are reportedly willing to go to any country that will take them (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011). Migrants, including refugees, often have idealised expectations of resettlement – however there is evidence Karens are pragmatic; both more sceptical of the benefits, and more aware of the uncertainties and hardships of resettling (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011). Karen resettlements to Australia, the US and elsewhere have 'mixed' results, but there are some notable trends in the literature. Firstly, there are different patterns in urban and rural experiences, with recent studies of rural experiences showing positive trends (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011; Gilhooly and Lee 2017). Secondly, Karen resettlers are quite strongly positioned in Australian media and community reports as 'model migrants', making large economic contributions and active efforts to engage and commit to local communities, especially in regional areas. Within these trends, large urban resettlements and secondary migrations to regional areas are stand-out communities positioned as successes.

Successful settlement is tied to early 'reception issues', disadvantage and contribution, but for Karen communities success seems more likely in rural than urban areas. For groups of Karen, problems centre on language difficulties (ABC 2013; Watkins, Razee and Richters 2012) and the lack of resettler and receiving communities, as Karen resettlement has a short history (ABC 2013). Humanitarian entrants are more likely than the general public to lack access to culturally or linguistically appropriate services and education, good employment outcomes and social integration (Correa-Velez, Spaaij and Upham 2013; MRC Hobart, pers. com. 4 September 2014; see section *Tasmania's migrant communities*). In urban areas of Tokyo, for example, 'Burmese' are likely to find work and can make a living, but housing is accessed through legal and illegal community members, and education is only partly successful (Banki 2006). This is true of Karen in urban Sydney, who can face gendered, cultural and socio-political barriers to education (Watkins, Razee and Richters 2012). Government services in Australia overall, however, support newcomers well, and compare well internationally (see Fozdar and Hartly 2013; ABC 2013). For instance, the reverse is true in places like Tokyo, where immigration and refugee systems are poorly equipped for permanent settlers (see Banki 2006). Refugees and other humanitarian migrants are increasingly settling in regional areas due to dispersal policies aimed at regional renewal and

the urban population pressures (including political pressures related to fears and concerns about Others, and ghettoization), and due to secondary migrations to quieter rural areas with farming and food processing opportunities (Schech 2014; see Marks 2014 cited in Gilhooly and Lee 2017). In Australia, Karen have been relocated to around 27 locations and now number several thousand (perhaps six thousand), but the timing and age of resettlements vary by location. The largest Karen settlements are in and around Brisbane (Queensland). Significant communities of Karens live in Perth and NSW also, and have been settled to southwest and western Sydney since the 1980s and 90s (STARTTS 2009), to places like Wollongong (see Ferber et al 2013), Parramatta, Auburn, Bankstown, Fairfield and Holroyd (STARTTS 2009). Karens began arriving in New South Wales and Western Australia in the late 80s (SE Victoria MRC 2011) but recent outward migration trends are apparent (see below). A population of over 2200 Karen resides in outer metro Melbourne (Paxton 2012; ABC 2015; McDonald et al 2009), in places like Bendigo and Kangaroo Flats (near Bendigo, Victoria), Sunshine, Werribee, Wyndam/Hobsons Bay (see Lane et al 2015), and Geelong. Tasmania has a Karen community of about 250, with the first families arriving in 2008.

Settlements of Karens to regional areas have been significant, strongly tied to employment opportunities and are seen as resounding successes (see AMES 2015; ABC 2015; Arnall 2015; Bennett 2015; Gilhooly and Lee 2017; MRC 2014; Paxton et al 2012). For example, significant numbers of Karens (now around 40 families or 150 people) from Perth quickly on-migrated to the regional town of Katanning for employment at an abattoir (MRC 2014; Arnall 2015). The Katanning meat processor employed Karens with little English, and has established a school-time friendly 'mother shift' (Bennett 2015; Ramdas Sankaran, MRC WA pers. com. 22 November 2016). During the seven years of settlement to Kattaning, 27 Karen families have purchased homes (Bennett 2015). This sense of success and happiness is also communicated by costumed Karen youth, who sing Sgaw in numerous music videos shot in Kattaning (see 'Welcome to Katanning', www.youtube.com). When examining migrant groups, geographical locality is of concern where segregation leads to inequality and disadvantage (Burnley 1999). Burnley used the 1991 census, and immigrant resident concentrations in Sydney, Australia, to argue that 'spatial concentration of disadvantage… occurs partly because of the way large cities grow and also because of the nature of market capitalism' (1999: 1296). Burnley (1999) found, however, that higher concentrations of migrants *per se*, even of those with low English, income and employment, is not causally linked to disadvantage. While Sydney is a significant immigrant city on both a national and

international scale, Burnley (1999) argues that 'the term segregation is inappropriate' for most overseas-born groups. Further, while the economic contribution of migrants is substantial and includes entrepreneurial activity (small businesses), humanitarian entrants also take business opportunities and risks, and innovate to provide food and services that benefit ethnic communities, and then communities more broadly (see Hugo 2014). Refugees find the costs and complexities of qualification or skills recognition difficult, and experience a 'gap' or time lag not experienced by skilled migrants in accessing local economies, and are most often in low-skill, low-status occupations (Hugo 2014). Hugo stresses this 'brain waste' has negative impacts for resettlers *and* communities, and advises refugee contributions be considered in the light of urgent international food security needs, and needs in southern states of Australia (Hugo 2014).

Comparing rural and urban Karen settlements

Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny (2011), along with Gilhooly and Lee (2017) show that overall, Karen settlements to more rural areas seem to be more successful while urban areas have more negative impacts. In their ethnography of Karen in urban US, Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny sum up Karen resettlement as 'a mixed blessing' (2011: 218). They conclude that 'Karen who have resettled to [urban locations in] the US live in meagre accommodation, work for the minimum wage and are frequently compelled to relocate, all the while struggling to retain their traditional values and practices' (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011: 218). They found that even in the early stages of resettlement in the US and Tokyo, formal services can be absent while unofficial, individual and voluntary support - mostly from faith-based communities and organisations (FBO's) and the community themselves - fill some of these needs (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011; see also Eby et al 2011; Banki 2006). Gilhooly and Lee used a participatory action approach to observe and interview in three urban and two rural Karen resettler communities in the US (2017). Their comparisons show that urban communities had more access to language and citizenship classes, work, public transport and carpooling, and traditional goods via large Asian grocers, but lacked interaction with neighbours, experienced far more intergenerational conflict, and lacked access to green spaces to grow or collect traditional foods (Gilhooly and Lee 2017; see Koh et al 2013). So, while Karen resettlers to urban areas of Australia can access economic capital and move about to access work and fellow community members, they need better access to resources for cultural maintenance (see discussion in Chapter 6).

In the accounts of Karen resettlers in Australia and the US, those from rural and regional areas[14] show a different pattern of experiences, and a more hopeful tone than urban studies. Gilhooly and Lee note, however, that 'scant attention… has been paid to refugees in rural areas' (2017: 38; see McDonald-Wilmsen et al 2009)[15]. Gilhooly and Lee's (2017) comparison of Karen resettlements in Georgia (US) show that while rural Karens lacked access to services compared to their urban counterparts (for example in 'Sandville' none were enrolled in language or citizenship classes) they also lacked many of the problems, especially intergenerational estrangement (cf Koh et al 2013). Sandville Karens, who come from farming backgrounds, not only 'benefitted from the familiar lifestyle of rural living' and had more access to gardens and could grow more food including raising chickens, they were able to maintain closer ties with their cultural heritage, religious community and children's lives (Gilhooly and Lee 2017). For regional resettlers, transitions were eased by smaller, more receptive churches and neighbourhoods, and parents found they were more able to control where children were, compared to urban environments (Gilhooly and Lee 2017). Australian news stories and community reports give a similarly positive account.

Regional Karen: 'model' migrants and on-migration

In Nhill in central Victoria, Karens have contributed a workforce for the local chicken processor, run sewing classes, a shop, and made friendships with locals who help with English (ABC 2015). A report from Dalwallinu shire (MRC 2014), an agricultural town northwest of Perth (WA) facing population decline due to fertility decline, aging and technological advances in farming methods, gives a similar success story. Both formal resettlement ('direct' resettlement, through the Australian government immigration program) and informal ('secondary' or migrant-driven) resettlement of refugees to rural and regional areas is increasing in Australia (McDonald-Wilmsen et al 2009). Secondary migration to more rural areas, especially for work with large meat processors, is common (see above;

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14 Many of Australia's Karen are in regional areas – often very small communities with limited infrastructure (outer metro Melbourne, for instance). All of Tasmania is classified as rural with low-density urban neighbourhoods adjacent to small, low-density cities, so can be compared with Bendigo but differentiated from major Australian centres such as Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide where other Karen populations are.

15 For example, in 2016 most of Australia's overseas-born were living in a capital city (83% compared to 61% Australian-born). For research that reviews policy and settlement to rural areas in Victoria, see McDonald-Wilmsen et al (2009, cited in Gilhooly and Lee 2017). See also community reports from Lane (n.d); SE Vic MRC (2011); Dalwalinu Shire (2014), STARTTS (2009).

Gilhooly and Lee 2017; Paxton et al 2012) and can confer benefits on both the receiving community and those who relocate. There is mixed evidence about the positive outcomes of refugee resettlement in regional and rural areas, especially for refugees, however. McDonald-Wilmsen (2009) and others make 12 propositions for policy around the concerns, challenges and opportunities of these settlements in Victoria (see discussion Chapter 6).

Successful settlement is not exclusively a question of urban or rural, but about which locations suit certain groups. In Australia especially, Karen resettlers to urban areas can more easily move about due to transport networks, and access economic opportunities including language and other education. But urban settlement is designed to distribute migrants (and therefore disadvantage), but this may not be conducive to cultural maintenance, which is advantageous for intergenerational harmony (see Koh 2013). Additionally, ethnic segregation is only problematic when it leads to spatial concentration of inequality and disadvantage (Burnley 1999). Also, even without relocation, skilled refugees are vulnerable to secondary labour markets (cash work, menial labour) with little job security (Hugo 2014). Conversely, while rural areas can offer a softer start and do not strip away familiar agricultural traditions, what is hidden in success stories from regional areas is that these often precipitate or result from secondary migration. When Karens relocate to more regional areas, often to work in meat processors, they may lose access to case-workers or language assistance (see Gilhooly and Lee 2017), and further fragment families or potential families. Paxton and others' (2012) health report on Karen arrivals to Melbourne, for example, sampled over 100 more Medicare records than the number resettled in that area. Significant secondary migrations appear to be outward movements to smaller (regional) Victorian and Western Australian communities, motivated by work opportunities. Community leaders, both Karen religious leaders, and non-Karen business or other community members, have facilitated these moves (Baptist Union rep pers. com 2016; see SE Victoria MRC 2011; Wilding and Nunn 2016).

Re-resettlement needs are shouldered by the Karen communities, which can place a burden on small groups, especially leaders who are almost always also religious leaders (see SE Victoria MRC 2011). Moves can be very positive, but also cause distress, as families are already 'stretched' (see Massey 1994, cited in Hutchinson 2000). Hutchinson explored the social wellbeing of African refugee women relocated to Tasmania and used Massey's (1994) term 'stretched' to describe these experiences. The 'stretch' that refugee families can experience, contains components of relational strain due to family at a distance or in danger,

economic burden including costs of (sponsoring) family reunion and the related transport and medical requirements, and emotional strains of both family separation and waiting for reunion (Hutchinson 2000; Okhovat et al 2017). Perhaps particular to experiences of Tasmanian humanitarian entrants, but tied to the other areas of strain, the economic and emotional strain of searching for work was experienced as significant (Hutchinson 2000). Furthermore, these relocation patterns suggest young males and older workers are 'better off' in regional areas with manufacturing work, but this could contribute to brain drain in original settlements and removes parents and potential spouses from these communities. This is problematic in places like Tasmania where the Karen settlers are predominantly female, and have significant numbers who are dependents. Also, Karens take pride in helping one another and dislike becoming a burden on the Australian community who they perceive to have done so much (STARTTS 2009). Other Karens who stay in Tasmania may prioritise family (and dependents), or operate as key part of a support network (as leaders), so remain tied to locations without suitable paid work, spouses and other opportunities.

Socio-religious groups and resettlement

Religion can be both taken for granted and missing from academic exploration; this dimension of Karen lives in the literature was limited to mentions in council and community reports, and local newspapers. But religion has a multifaceted role in transnational lives, offering support structures and resources in a new context, and operating to sustain membership and establish more familiar territory (see Rangkla 2003; see Theory – *Resettler Karen*). This reflects a broader 'religion-sanctuary nexus' that plays out across the phases of displacement (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011). For example, both Muslim and Christian organisations, inter-faith coalitions and local congregations funded and managed assistance to conflict-displaced Nigerians and Kenyans (see Orjii 2011 and Parsitau 2011 respectively, cited in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011). In the Kenyan situation, religious leaders and spaces offering assistance were also among those suffering violence and displacement, and in the refugee camps, faith-based personal and collective support systems developed among survivors of violence (Parsitau 2001, cited in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011). The stories of violence and displacement that affected villagers in Burma often included accounts from missionaries and local pastors equally affected by the unrest, some taking up arms, others harshly treated due to their leadership position (Rogers 2004). Likewise, displaced Karens living illegally (and impoverished) in Thailand often benefit from the sociality and relative wealth of an established local monastery (Rangkla 2013).

In terms of the support, while state support for newly arrived Karen communities is good (ABC 2013), local churches in Australia and Canada represent a significant source of ongoing support and boost the capacity of formal services (ABC 2013; see also Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011; Eby et al 2011). In the US, FBO's have a significant legacy of refugee support and contribute to local integration, and meeting social and economic needs (Eby et al 2011). While they are traditionally animist and majority Buddhist, most Karen resettled in Australia are Christians (ABC 2013). With respect to Karen resettlement in Australia, commentators note that in addition to formal services, the 'pastoral, human side is being provided by the churches, especially the Baptist churches' (ABC 2013). Conversely, there is good evidence additional English-language and perhaps other informal tutoring or mentoring is provided by community members including churchgoers (see Bennett 2015). One Karen church in Brisbane has over 400 regular attenders – this is considered one of the largest of all Baptist congregations in Australia (Baptist Union representative, pers. com May 2017). In Katanning NSW, Karens use the local Baptist church facilities for their services but have purchased 16 acres with a loan from the Baptist Financial Services – each community member contributes a small weekly amount to the loan, and plan to grow vegetables on the land, to raise the funds to build a church (Arnall 2015; Bennett 2015; BFS 2016; Holgate 2015). In Tasmania, churches and other local groups and families offered unused land to Hmong refugees to grow vegetables (Eldridge 2008). Despite the religious engagement of resettler Karens in Australia, these prominent inclinations remain hidden in small communities and church newsletters.

In terms of membership and place-making, ritual and spiritual practices among displaced Karen operate to create and sustain a sense of culture and community across a range of new locations. In Thailand, displaced Pwo Karen and Karenni (Red Karen) create a sense of home and place by observing celebrations and festivals with local Buddhists, but their participation is used for both merit-making and sociality – thus, building community from fractured village lives (Rangkla 2013; see Theory - *Resettler Karen*). Rangkla (2013: 21) argues that Karen attachments and commitments are to a

> religiously constituted locality rather than to ethno-nationalist and millenarian yearnings for a 'lost' homeland or ethnic identity. Their locality emerges in the re-enactment of MBBT [Mon-Burmese Buddhist Tradition] institutions and practices

Similarly, animist practices such as the wrist tying ceremony (*Lah Ku Gee Su*) have become

key symbols of identity on the Karen-diaspora calendar more generally (see Phan 2010: 38-9; Bird et al 2016) and among the Hmong diaspora (see Eldridge 2008) [16]. Bird and others' description of a Brisbane wrist-tying ceremony reveals a strong Australian and Karen nationalist flavour to the gathering, which included the display of Karen and Australian flags, an acknowledgement of indigenous Australians[17], and disparate Karen speakers calling for unity in Sgaw Karen, English, and Pwo Karen (2016). The wrist-tying at the ceremony was linked to traditional rather than religious meanings around wellbeing and gathering but overlaid by somewhat politicised ideas of ethnic (and interethnic) unity (Bird et al 2016).

In Australia, Karen celebrations of New Year appear to have taken on somewhat of a Karen unification role, even a 'Burmese' label. New Year is marked by Karens of all religions, and at these gatherings 'unity' is a trope and leaders assert the celebration is for all Karens of all religions to come together to continue, and display and share their culture with Australians (Bird et al 2016). Tasmania, unlike both large metro and small regional settlements of Australian Karens, do not host a New Year (cf Katanning, see facebook.com/Karenwelfarewa/). However, it is clear this non-religious ritual participation also serves as a community-building activity – Karen youth from all over Australia will join local celebrations in Brisbane or Perth. Tasmania Karen do not object to the travel, but do lament the lack of a New Year celebration in this State.

Tasmania's migrant communities

Tasmania is one of Australia's least ethnically diverse regions, and resettlement scholarship out of Tasmania is correspondingly low (see Neumann 2016)[18]. Tasmania's population growth due to net overseas migration (NOM) was about 34%, compared to representing over 55% of growth nationally (ABS 2011). Around 31% of the total NOM figure for Tasmania were people on international student visas (ABS 2011). Of the overseas-born population in Tasmania only 4.3% are from a non-English speaking background (DIPB 2014; ABS 2016).

[16] A string tied to the wrist is an animist practice to keep spirits bound to a person to prevent sickness (see Phan 2010; Eldridge 2008). Bird et al's (2016) ethnography describes wrist-tying in an Australian setting.

[17] This public acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land is made by a non-indigenous speaker to pay respects to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres-Strait Islanders, while a Welcome to Country is given by an indigenous elder.

[18] Australia's population is nearly half (49%) either overseas born (referred to as 'first generation Australian') or has one or both parents born overseas ('second generation Australian') (see ABS 2016). Tasmania gains around 1% of Australia's net overseas migration (ABS 2011).

In addition, while Tasmania has proportionately high refugee resettlement rates per capita, outflow rates are also high (ABS 2011; Julian et al 1997). For example, Tasmania has not retained the populations of Vietnamese, Hmong, Bosnian and El Salvadorans, who left seeking employment and opportunities in larger communities (Flanagan 2007: 7; Boyce and Madden 2000; Julian et al 1997). Congolese and other African nationals have also not been retained (Flanagan 2007; *Mercury* 4-5 July 2015). In larger centres of Tasmania, people from Burma are a significant group (these are predominantly Burmese, and Chin or Mon) while the southern capital of Hobart has received humanitarian entrants from Burma mostly to outlying suburbs and low-density suburban-industrial areas. Unlike other Australian cities 'visible' ethnic groups are atypical, small and spatially concentrated to a few regional cities (Julian et al 1997). To give a sense of social life, unlike in Sydney, shoppers in this State cannot find a woman in a hijab on a supermarket register (cf Noble 2005), but students can meet international students studying for a PhD at the local University (see ABS 2011), or shopping at one of the dozen international food stores in Hobart - mostly multi-ethnic Asian grocers[19]. The Hmong, refugees from the communist takeover of Laos, are the most significant resettled community to have left the State (see Eldridge 2008; Julian et al 1997). Of a community over six hundred strong, only a few dozen Hmong families remain selling Asian vegetables at Hobart's Salamanca Market, the rest leaving to join Hmong in Brisbane with the hope of obtaining farmland and creating a larger community (see Eldridge 2008). Community size, therefore, cannot be conflated with the sustainability of refugee communities in Tasmania.

The Karen population in Tasmania is in flux due to on-migration but has grown exponentially since the first nine arrivals in 2008 to 260 individuals from about 40 families (about 160 across 37 households are very engaged at TFC). The 2011 census indicates that 6, 400 people spoke 'Karen' (up from 783 in 2006), the second fastest-growing non-English non-Indigenous language in Australia (DIPB 2014: 23). The Tasmanian Karen are drawn from at least six of the nine refugee camps on the TBB, as even close family members could have been living in separate camps, and some arrivals know no-one prior to arrival (further details are given in the Methods and Findings). Around 100 Karen have left Tasmania. However, some families have returned over the last decade, citing city travel and stress a reason to

[19] The capital city has Indian spice shops, a Japanese retailer, an Africa hair shopfront and a Korean supermarket, plus the Chinese Emporium stocks items from around Asia and South America, but there are no specific outlets such as a Karen store.

return to a slower, smaller State (see also Mercury 4-5 July 2015). Many Karens relocated interstate to access hotel, IT and agricultural work, or alternative family support networks. For instance, one young man left for a meatworks near Perth, leaving a fiancé in the State, while another moved to Melbourne to marry. A young family moved when their mother became a grandmother, and other Karens have been drawn away by employment and education in larger centres. Communities that can host big Karen events like New Year are drawcards for young people.

Details about the demographics, employment, education status of the Tasmania Karen are anecdotal and resulting from this study (published statistics are unavailable). All of Tasmania's migrants, including the Tasmania Karens, have had limited success finding work for a mix of reasons. Firstly, only about 20% of the refugee-born population in the State are in employment (compared to 68% Australian born) (Julian et al 1997). Secondly, out-migration (interstate relocation) of Tasmanians of working age is a feature of the State – this trend is particularly acute among migrants (Denney 2018; *Mercury* TasWeekend 4-5 July 2015). Thirdly, employment opportunities, especially for unskilled agricultural and other work, and roles requiring little English, are scarce in the Tasmanian economy. Two further features of the Karen community contribute to these trends. First, the Tasmania Karen have been arriving in the State over the last 10 years, while refugee-born communities can take a generation to match Australian-born labour participation rates (Hugo 2014). Second, the Tasmania Karen are an older, feminised group, with a high proportion of 'dependents' such as children and older women. A good proportion of these older women and several of the men are illiterate in their own language and have mobility and sight problems that limit work opportunities. Those Tasmania Karens who have paid work are mostly older teens and younger adults who completed primary or secondary schooling in Australia. They work in community liaison and child care. Two have attempted University but the only successful student relocated interstate after one year. A few adults work seasonally on farms, one as a masseuse, one man is full-time in factory work another is a security guard.

There is little research beyond the policy context that shows why migrant communities choose to stay in the State, and yet particular social and political contexts are of critical importance to the experiences of migration (Jacobs 2011:9). Tasmania offers suburban living in a rural setting, so sits between the large urban areas of Australia and the more geographically isolated regional settlements located out from larger metropolitan areas.

Further, the above account of resettlement research shows a continuing neglect of the impacts on the 'host' or original community, and the two-way process of settlement (Strang and Ager 2010; Neumann 2016). What is still missing is a recognition of how churchgoing and religious involvement impacts these resettlers, their home-making, family, leadership and resource structures. Exploring these factors may contribute to an understanding of more sustainable communities in rural and suburban Australia.

Ch 2 Research problem, orienting theory and questions

> [in an] increasingly untidy post-colonial world…the vocabulary of historical anthropology has shifted from unidirectional terms such as 'impact' to multivalent notions of 'encounter' and 'entanglement' (Linnekin 1993: 353)

This chapter will flag those theories that need introduction prior to their use in the findings chapters and discussion. Theory and theory generation, that is, 'accounting for behaviour' by developing an explanatory or comparative language, is integral to the ethnographic endeavour (Agar 1980: 188-90; Fine 2003). Rather than present the concepts generated within this study - new theory - alongside an unwieldy discussion of existing theory, selected theories from existing arguments are outlined here to make later analytical discussion more manageable. This chapter contains two parts. Part 1 is a brief stock-take of the resettlement and refugee research in terms of several emphases that appear in the literature. The prominence of structural analyses in these literatures is problematised as the definitions and concerns of policy and 'problem' discourses (Black 2001; Neumann 2016) are incommensurate with this study (see Bryman 2012). Part 2 uses selected theories of the 'middle range' (Merton 1968) to outline the problem or 'puzzle' that facilitated the development of methodology and the choice and creation of micro sociological concepts for this study (see Bruce 1994; Bryman 2012). This review of literature has been made in order to take a stance, and to present theory useful to the examination of religious resettler actions and interactions.

Part 1: Resettlement discourses

Australia is a significant immigrant nation but is considered a 'successful' multicultural society, characterised by concentrations of over-seas born populations but not segregation and ghettoization (Burnley 1999), few riots and much race politics but not major terrorist or anti-refugee movements (Bouma 2015; Burnley 1999; Ho 2011). Despite a recent focus-shift onto the manifold social effects of people movements around the world, and domestic everyday multiculture (eg: Wise and Velayutham 2009), migration and resettling are positioned as a 'policy issue' in Australia (Black 2011; see Thomas 2016; McDonald-Wilmsen et al 2009). For instance, the plight of refugees is now on the international agenda, but discourse in Australia consistently includes constructions of asylum seekers as 'unwanted invaders' outside the nation (Parker 2015), and deviant or problem populations inside the

nation (ABC 2013; Cresswell 2014; Pakulski 2014; Pickering 2001; Strang and Ager 2010: 593). Cresswell (2014: 181, 184-5) explains these images position refugees as 'out of place' and a threat to 'our' place and culture. Academic debates speak to these 'anti refugee sentiments' by reference to the broader structural processes of group formation such as globalisation (Featherstone 1990, 1995 and Pieterse 1995, cited in Anthias 1998; Castles 2002), and identity politics, that is, shared and assumed boundary formations around the 'other' (Said 1978 and Bhabha 1990, cited in Holmes et al 2015: 94). Simmel (1950) wrote that group boundaries form around 'the stranger' and determine who has not always belonged, so is different. In Australia, 'Othering', largely applies to non-whites, namely, diverse peoples categorised as 'Asian', and recently, those of African or Middle Eastern appearance have been constructed as a threat to an imagined Australia (Anderson 1991; Green, Sonn & Matsebula 2007; Holmes et al 2015). This operates to essentialise, politicise and polarise 'ethnic' identities (Anthias 1998; Cohen 1993). However, ethnic identities are constructed and heterogenous, and community formation is not inevitable (Holmes, Hughes and Julian 2015).

Refugee resettlement as a policy issue of 'problem' groups

Diversity and cultural difference in Australia have been managed by a public policy of multiculturalism in response to large (non-white) post-WWII migrant intakes but has been both the subject of moral panics and celebrated as a success (see Bouma 2015; Pakulski 2014). Multicultural policy was intended to promote social inclusion, however ideological approaches around Australian national identity, and discourses that 'other' non-whites, have disrupted these aims. So, migrants do experience structural inequalities (see Vertovec 2010) and refugees lack equal access to civic participation due to language barriers and citizenship (Fozdar and Hartley 2013; Watkins 2012). The terms refugee, asylum seeker and migrant conflate very different and diverse groups in terms of policy, resettlement needs, experiences and planning, community reception and so on (see Black 2001; Karlson 2011)[20]. For instance, while migration is shaped by social and family networks for all types of migrants, for refugees their status, social identity and experiences of settlement can be further shaped

[20] Article 1 of the 1951 refugee convention defines a refugee as 'a person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.

by high levels of state intervention and control (Hein 1993; Robinson 2013). Yet given the diversity of displacement, mobility and resettlement experiences migrants cannot always be neatly compartmentalised by 'type' (see Ganguly-Scrase and Lahiri-Dutt 2012)[21]. Due to their background, however, refugees may also feel their condition of exile and adaptation more acutely than other migrants (Hein 1993). In addition, in Australia the term refugee and asylum seeker have been co-opted for different political and ideological purposes. For example, a central issue during Australia's 2001 election campaign was the refugee 'crisis' with media discourses representing asylum seekers as 'boat people' and prompting popular fears of a 'flood' of refugees (Gale 2004). Media rhetoric and popular tautologies like 'genuine refugee' also shaped community perceptions of asylum seekers as a 'problem', 'illegal', deviant (Pickering 2001) and a threat to Australian norms and values (McKay et al 2012). In these ways, asylum seekers and refugees – separate groups – are conflated. But contra the focus of much multicultural literature on policy, this study focuses on the everyday. While racism and other discomforts cannot be ignored and are a reality of translocal lives, interpersonal encounters and resettlement experiences are far more multifaceted. Thus, the reality of everyday life in Australia is multicultural, even described as a 'mundane' multiculture (Wise 2009; Ho 2011). The frequency of daily interactions, even ubiquitousness of inter-ethnic marriage in Australia (Moran 2011) gives people a 'capability to make multiculture' (Back and Sinha 2016: 517).

(Ethnic) integration: expectations of the 'other'

Australian refugee-resettlement scholarship has accelerated over the last ten years (Neumann 2016) and has a particular focus; (migrant) integration. Neumann's (2016: 4) useful bibliography of this literature identifies a gap, saying that scholars emphasise

> …obstacles to successful settlement…focused on the refugees themselves (for example, their lack of formal educational qualifications or their health problems) or on Australian service providers… underpinned by the assumption that successful

[21] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines refugee resettlement in the following way 'Resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. The status provided should ensure protection against refoulment and provide a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. It should also carry with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country' (UNHCR 2004b). However, refugee resettlement has also been defined as a gradual 'process' whereby people gain feelings of control over their lives, and develop a sense of normality, or a new normal compared to home and their prior lives (Colic-Piesker & Tilbury 2003, p. 62).

> resettlement is dependent on refugees' ability to adapt and on the ability of Australian institutions to recognise the specific needs of refugees. There has been little recognition of the broader changes to Australian identities and cultures that were brought about by the settlement of refugees[22].

This focus on the 'other', the 'ethnic community' and 'their' integration, social location, and cultural maintenance or change are unhelpful assumptions. So, while refugee status is important, and spotlighting structural constraints like settlement service deficiencies or linguistic exclusion can be useful, Neumann (2016) suggests it can position migrants as responsible for transitions. Integration concerns can position the migrant as the maker of their own destiny – the push is for independence in English, transport, and integration into schools or workplaces (an 'earn or learn' emphasis in Australian political rhetoric), and the expectation the group will mingle socially, and not form an enclave. Yet this ignores diversity and discord within groups. And it ignores how inclusion and belonging are two-way processes (Strang and Ager 2010). Recognising that resettlement involves both migrant and established families, it is important that 'receiving communities' be recognised as constituted by a mix of existing ethnic groups which includes longstanding 'locals'.

Refugee reception: issues and actions

Refugee studies and reports include a range of 'reception issues' for refugee receiving communities, such as exclusion from social life and services (ABC 2013; Correa-Velez et al 2013; Fozdar and Hartley 2013), barriers to participation created by a lack of English (ABC 2013; Watkins, Razee and Richters 2012), and psychological trauma from political conflict and instability (Couch et al 2010; Schweitzer et al 2001). Research on refugees informed by policy or clinical paradigms can inadvertently subsume negative media representations of refugees as passive victims (see Vertovec 1996). Karen refugees are no exception, presented as dependent, helpless recipients (see Rangkla 2013: 9), who need to move beyond the 'day-to-day mentality' (Wilding and Nunn 2016: 19). Yet, while many Karens in Bendigo show delayed trauma-reactions, few are eager to share their stories and rarely self-refer to therapists (Couch et al 2010; see Cho 2011 for exception). Hutchinson (2010) explains that

[22] Neumann shows that a broad range of groups have been studied, and research has good depth on one group or area – but gaps remain in the research attention paid to historical dimensions, and '*comprehensive* analyses that relate the findings of resettlement studies to policy changes' (2016:4 original emphasis).

for African refugee women in Tasmania, suffering and stress result from the uncertainties of family safety and reunion, the burdens of supporting family in Africa and Australia, and the search for work. Similarly, Westoby (2009) examines the 'sociality' of both wounding and healing for Sudanese refugees, whose distress centred not on past traumas but on the present realities of resettlement. The resettlement experiences of family separation, relocation and new cultural context disrupted social life; thus, resettlers found therapy not in professional relationships but community re-formation (Westoby 2009). As emotional attachments to an ethnic community (often also a community of faith) help resettlers deal with an unfamiliar home (Counted 2016; van der Meulen 2012; Borwick et al 2013), definitions of health and inclusion need to redeem the day-to-day sociality for refugee healing (see Westoby 2009).

Not only do asylum seekers, recent and resettled communities not only face different policy contexts (Neumann 2016; Strang and Ager 2010), they also enter different local arenas with different opportunities to interact and join social life. For example, Karen resettlements to urban areas of the US have a very different character to those in regional Australia (see Part 2). Amin (2002) calls gathering places such as clubs and classrooms and workplaces 'micro publics', as they are centres of interaction and offer social participation (cited in Wise 2009: 40). 'Participation' and engagement in a micro public, however, are ambiguous (see van der Meulen 2012). For instance, receiving communities are equated with 'hosts', which has positive connotations of welcome, but transforms migrants into 'guests' (see Hage 1998), expected to be grateful (see Wise 2009). Hudson and others (2009) found an ironic expectation in a Northern England neighbourhood, where longstanding locals placed the onus for cultural mixing on newcomers. This is at odds with everyday meanings of host, hosting, hospitality and welcome. Wise (2009) recounts how in 1950s Australia 'welcome committees' fostered a host-guest relational structure that was well intended but somewhat 'culture blind' or assimilatory. Wise (2009) notes how critiques and changes to these policies effected a shift in the 70s from settlement embedded in community and voluntary organisations to provision by government services. The unfortunate result was that everyday Australians developed a perception they 'no longer had 'permission or responsibility to care' about their diverse co-citizens' (Wise 2009: 41). The research into everyday multiculturalism, however, shows that informal interactions remain a potent capability in Australia, and these orientations are a vibrant form of inclusion (Back and Sinha 2016; Bouma 2015; see Arnall 2015; Couch et al 2010; Gilhooly and Lee 2017). In Mount Gambier (South Australia), for instance, Karen at a local church with a culturally-sensitive minister are welcomed and

encouraged to engage in non-language-based aspects of the service such as singing and serving tea (Piper 2008: cited in Couch et al 2010: 33). These are host/guest relations that could engender 'lopsided gratitude' but instead, as this is sociality based in reciprocity and exchange rather than the dominance (paternalism) of one group over another, the encounter builds social ties (Wise 2009: 30-36; see Komter 2005: 221 cited in Wise 2009: 30).

So, while refugees do experience structural marginalisation and inequality, even lack access to status, resources and mobility, resettlement can be a very active process (Manjikian 2010; STARTTS 2009). For example, refugees do attend schools and become members of local churches and sports clubs and get involved in everyday life (see Back and Sinha 2016; Wilding and Nunn 2016). Furthermore, 'host' communities are often significantly constituted by family and friends from the home culture who provide key entrées into unfamiliar social settings. These so-called enclaves not only serve positive functions for migrant acculturation (Gilhooly and Lee 2017) they can have distinctly positive impacts on local communities and economies by starting local businesses (Hugo 2014), revitalising existing churches (Nazor 2016), investing in housing, and buying land to establish new churches (Bennett 2015). For instance, in the 80s Dutch resettlers to southern Tasmania resisted integration in order to maintain their ethno-religious culture, so formed their own schools and established the reformed churches that still operate today as valued community institutions (Julian 1989 see Julian 2006). And across Australia more recently, significant groups of younger refugee families from South Sudan, and Asian Christians have revitalised local church congregations (Nazor 2016). There is some evidence that Karen refugee resettlers have maintained membership of Karen activist organisations based in Thailand (for example in New Zealand, see Cho 2011), but the trends are stronger for local youth sporting events and community organisations, and joining local Catholic, Baptist and Seventh Day Adventist churches, and Buddhist gatherings (ABC 2013; Couch et al 2010; Wilding and Nunn 2016; Cho 2011).

Identity, diaspora and realities of resettling as process

Discussions emerging from Western identity theory frame refugees and migrants as striving towards the creation of coherent ethnic identities or 'diasporas'. Late modernity and the demise of grand narratives become relevant to both identity and representation – central figures in the (macro) sociological imagining (see Giddens 1991). But the creation of a diasporic imagining through shared histories can tend to essentialise past identity (Anthias 1998), and politicise present identity (see Cohen 1993, Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). Macro

perspectives (Anthias includes here concepts like ‘diaspora’) also offer less visual acuity on intersectionality – yet ethnicity intersects with class, gender, trans-ethnic alliance and religion (Anthias 1998). Anthias points out that the term diaspora

> formulates a population as a transnational *community*. The assumption is that there is a natural and unproblematic 'organic' community of people without division or difference, dedicated to the same political project(s) (1998: 563 original emphasis)

Anthias explains ‘diaspora’ is both social *condition* and social *process* including transnational relations and acknowledges that the concept shifts focus away from ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ but perhaps insufficiently away from presumed ‘primordial bonds’ with a ‘homeland’ (1998: 557; see below). Anthias notes that globalising forces subvert national ties (Clifford 1994, cited in Anthias 1998: 566), and uses Cohen (1993) to talk about how ‘unease’ with cultural difference is not necessarily ‘primordial bonding’ but can lead to ethnic identification and solidarity (1998: 563). For instance, migrants may ‘orient their lives to two or more societies and develop transnational communities and consciousness’ (Castles 2002: 1146). This consciousness seems evident in Cho’s (2011) study of Burmese diaspora in New Zealand (see Discussion). However, Castles (2002) notes that these social networks made possible by technology and global travel are informal. Mary Waters observed new Americans and described how their culture operated to create ‘ethnic options’ - choices about ethnic identification, participation and membership (cited in Gans 2009). This can mean that while ‘ethnic nationalism’ can prompt bloody power struggles, ethnopolitical action and nationalistic feelings in America, these are increasingly emerging from an ‘ethnicity [that is] becoming harmless’ (Gans 2009: 126). The actions of ‘doing’ of resettlement are communal, not simply political (see Amin 2008). And when the temporality of resettling is considered, ethnic identification, solidarity and social position and citizenship are implicated in particular ways in migrant lives at different stages.

Stage and generation: using the term resettler

Anthropologists have noted that, for migrants, the salience of cultural practices changes over successive generations. Gans’ 1979 article on ‘symbolic ethnicity’, however, proposed that ‘ethnicity can survive without significant social or cultural participation’ (cited in Gans 2009: 123). Gans (1979) used his ethnographic study of third and fourth generation Jewish migrants to the United States (US), to show that ‘behavioural ethnicity’ – unconscious practices and ways of life in the first generation - gave way to more optional, occasional, ‘symbolic’

participation in ethnic traditions for third and subsequent generations of Jews living in the US. Identity was important for first generation Jews, but they were just *being* Jewish, rather than *doing* or feeling Jewish – the reflexive practice Gans observed in later generations. Gans notes that cultural practices such as festival attendance were conspicuous but no longer carried any social penalties ('status costs') for these later generations (Gans 1979: 5, 10-11). This points to a change in social expectations both from the broader society and from within the ethnic group (Gans 1979: 7-8). Gans (1979) identifies each generation as a different 'stage' in a process – in part a response to processes of assimilation and acculturation he saw were inevitable. At each stage 'ethnic identity needs' decline as social constraints loosen and traditions become divorced from everyday identification and life (Gans 1979: 5, 10-11).

The term 'generation' in the foregoing is useful to show how length of settlement affects the character of settlement. The ABS (2016) uses second generation to refer to those born in Australia of overseas parents. Hugo's (2014) research uses 'second generation' to refer to refugees and humanitarian entrants who were under twelve on arrival; this allows for contiguous arrivals. Significantly, then, Gans' research shows that the very first generation are more focused on 'pragmatic imperatives' than ethnic identity needs (Gans 1979: 9). In addition, migrants and refugees arrive with very different experiences of community fragmentation, formation and resources to build from. For example, Italian Catholics and the Polish community in Britain studied by Burrell (2006), and the Reformed Dutch resettlers reported in Julian's ethnography (1989, 2006) reproduced ethno-religious cultural practices in church and festival settings that afforded both social mobility (in time), and sustained resettler-initiated communities. While in the 90s the Hmong were the largest intake of refugees to Tasmania and grew larger through refugee-initiated chain migration with a dense geographical and social network (Julian et al 1997), their mobility was marked by mass exodus to Queensland to access ethnic and economic opportunities (Julian et al 1997; Eldridge 2008). Swe's (2013) study with Burmese resettlers in Norway adds complexity to these constructions, however. Swe (2013: 229) defines mobility as the 'entanglement of movement, representation, and practice' but reveals how these refugee narratives 'equate mobility with escape from poverty'. Refugee arrivals, including Karens, are often subjected to dispersal policies (ABC 2013; see Deuchar 2011; Schech 2014) and in Tasmania this has contributed to relatively small communities whose ethnic and socio-economic origins are increasingly diverse (Julian et al 1997). Further, refugee camps do not always reproduce the 'spatial proximity of traditional relationships' such that traditional social structures are

'shredded' and this impacts upon cultural maintenance (Smalley 1986: 18, cited in Eldridge 2008: 48). The Karens in Tasmania also originate from a range of language backgrounds, and are either from disrupted villages, seaside or more urban areas, and are family fragments.

So, while broader social processes do shape migrant lives, macro and ethnic perspectives are but one framework. A focus on ethnic identity can ignore community heterogeneity and fragmentation, and identity negotiation, meaning-making and practice at the level of lived experience. These approaches can also reify the salience of identity for early generations of migrants and miss what is happening in the everyday for resettlers, at the level of interaction, and in micro spaces. Migrant experiences are often characterised by reference to generation (first and second), however for refugees this process is different and perhaps slower in terms of cultural resources, reproduction and community building. For refugees, then, the term generation may also differentiate too strictly or insufficiently the experiences and practices of parents and their children due to diversity in community capitals (disadvantage), cultural adherence and adoption/adaptation. In this study, then, the term 'resettler' is used as shorthand for the multivalent experiences and actions of the first and second generations of refugee-background migrants, such as the Tasmania Karen. This study is thus oriented towards the features and role of the local in resettling and networks and understands how longstanding locals and newcomers can be active and operate as 'receiving communities'. Next, I introduce some concepts from interactionist and micro sociological approaches that have more traction in this empirical project.

Part 2: Theories of the middle range[23]

Most theory-generation in sociology is middle range and is like meta theory in that it is based in abstraction from the empirical world and can be 'tested' - used in further investigation (Merton 1968). Middle range theory, or mid-range theory (Strang and Ager 2010), is contra to meta theoretical work or approaches as proposed by Parsons, in that it does not attempt to create totalising or universal explanations for all social reality (Merton 1968). Sociological theory comprises 'logically interconnected conceptions which are limited and modest in scope' (Merton 1968: 5). Theories of the middle range, Merton explains, sit at an intermediary point between 'the minor working hypotheses that happen in abundance during the day-by-day routine of research, and the all-inclusive speculations comprising a master

[23] This is substantive theory, rather than ethnographic (methodological), which I cover in the relevant section.

conceptual scheme' (1968: 5). Thus, middle range theory is less speculative but more tied to the empirical. Since theory at this level provides a framework to structure academic debate and dialogue with policymakers (Strang and Ager 2010) this study is micro sociology rather than policy, but recommendations are included (see *Thesis contribution*). This thesis takes theoretical cues from theories around (migration) stage, social spaces (micro publics), and the process and resources of settlement including social capitals. These are discussed in turn next, to flag these theories prior to the discussion chapter. Of these theories, the foregoing discussion of migrant 'stage' or generation is central to features of migrant lives over time, perhaps particularly in terms of religious and cultural life (Gans 1979; 2009). Just as Gans' (1979) investigation of observable ethnicity was conducted by reference to behaviour and symbolic display, themes of identity, ritual, interaction, space, and micro publics are of relevance. Rather than repeat empirical work already presented on (migration) 'stage', the next section continues to examine middle range theories, in light of these religious resettler Karens, and picks up on these themes again in the Discussion.

Research questions

A traditional thesis may include research questions at this point, but with inductive research using friendship methods, it is difficult to specify these before the data is collected (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 740). However, a well-articulated and detailed methodology can function as a replacement for research questions and provide a context (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 740). This study follows this format by presenting a detailed and reflexive methodology in the next chapter. As a reminder, this research was oriented by questions around two kinds of action. Firstly, how multicultural encounters play out in a socio-religious setting, and secondly how religious resettlers 'do' resettlement as an active process. The research curiosity is around how spaces, encounters and settling processes interact with religion to foster community and capitals. As a methodological reminder, in this research, *practice* - the routines and actions of people - in a religious space is the focus, rather religion per se. This stance is similar to that of Fine, whose ethnography on Little League ideoculture (1979) was not a sociology of sport, nor about the organisational realities of baseball, but an examination of small group interaction (cited in Fine 2003; Gary Fine pers. com. 22 March 2018). Similarly, this study is not ethnography within the sociology of religion, nor about the organisational realities of religion, but about group interaction and integration behaviour. Thus, it emphasises local culture over ethnic culture and the focus is on a space, practices, and a people who happen to be religious. The methods used in this study also echo Wise (2005; 2008) Wise and

Velayutham's (2009) approach to examining everyday multiculture (see Chapter 3, section on *Methodology from everyday multiculture)*.

Resettler Karen: identity, capitals, religion and emplacement work

Taking identity and ethnicity as social constructions, I want to emphasise the historical and current social setting for these resettlers. Firstly, this study is about recently arrived (first and second-generation migrants)[24], historically agrarian people (subsistence farmers, Gilhooly and Lee 2017), from a South Asian (collectivist) culture. Karens share similar origins and village lives, and similar conditions due to internal conflict in Burma. Yet, as shown in the background, the 'Karen' ethnic identity has been subject to blatant outsider attack, and complex insider narratives and leadership challenges due to 'substantial cultural, religious, linguistic and geographical diversity' (Kuroiwa and Verkuyten 2006: 391). A British medic, reflecting on interactions with Karens, found the people were quietly but soundly independent, only including Western influence and programmes slowly, and 'through the medium of relationship' – even if needs were urgent (Rogers 2004: 213). In Australia, Karens encounter more (identity) freedoms than in their traditional societies and under their former government. But as Herbert Gans proposed, first generation migrants' ethnic participation denotes an instrumental, rather than simply expressive function (1979: 9). Gans (1979, 2009) also argues that 'ethnic involvement' is shaped by family socialisation. Like many migrants, Karen social life centres around an extended family, and church and faith gatherings permeate their everyday and celebration events (Bird 2015; Worland et al 2013; cf Eby et al 2011). As 'doing church' is such a strong feature of these Karens' family and social life this study will emphasise the world of practice around these routines and habits.

Bonding and bridging capital

Lived experience is impacted by both the broader economic and social patterns, and the local network context. For instance, resettlers face barriers to economic participation, particularly to do with English-language proficiency, but have resources and capabilities that can be understood as capital(s). Hugo (2014) shows that migrants experience language and

24 The term 'generation' follows Australian conventions (see ABS 2016). Refugee-background migrants are considered 'new arrivals' in the first 12 months, but contiguous arrivals mean this group range from new arrivals to those who have been settled for ten years. So, this group comprises 'first generation' (born overseas) plus a small 'second generation' (parents born overseas, i.e; Australian-born Karen, all under ten years old).

education barriers but make real improvements in labour force participation with each successive generation, albeit with a 'refugee gap' explained by discrimination. So, resettlers 'live in another language' but often lack English and English-speaking contacts and networks and speak with an accent (Colic-Peisker 2002). These features create difficulties in navigating new social norms and systems including education and bureaucracy and can diminish feelings of belonging (Colic-Peisker 2002). But, resettlers have other people-resources unaccounted for in measures of 'inclusion'. Leonard (2004) makes a useful distinction between Putnam's (2000) bonding and bridging capitals, to explore how network strength and social capital (people resources) can have complex inclusionary and exclusionary effects. For example, highly bonded ethnic communities are often both cause and symptom of marginalisation and a lack of integration. For example, there are less opportunities for young people in the disconnected communities of Glasgow, where ethnic solidarity is a factor in gang membership (see Deuchar 2011). According to Deuchar (2011), social capital and intercultural bridging can ameliorate these trends and build intercultural cohesion. This follows Putnam's (2000) argument that bridging capitals can be fragile but lead to inclusion (cited in Leonard 2004). A similar argument is contained in Mark Granovetter's (1973) 'strength of weak ties', that explores the cohesive power of informal networks for communication between groups. Granovetter (1973) notes that groups are often dense, but that a single friendship with an outsider, even just an acquaintance, can help with the spread of ideas and information thus acting as a bridge between groups. This small integration or diversity between disparate groups affords access to a greater 'array of socio-economic and cultural resources' (Manjikian 2010: 57). But Leonard (2004) goes on to critique the assumption that bonding capitals must be undermined for bridging capital to develop. Leonard examines a Catholic community in Belfast to argue that both bonding and bridging can be complex and uneven, and the transition to bridging capital may also reinforce or involve marginalisation (Leonard 2004). For example, families involved in an informal economy of fish may capitalise on good connections (bonds and bridges) to start a local business with family, and build wealth. But the community as a whole, including members formerly part of the exchange-based economy, have lost access to resources (affordable fish), and may be excluded from the new capital-raising venture (business ownership or profits). Thus, while bonding contributes to newcomers 'getting by', bridging can contribute to 'getting ahead' (Leonard 2004). And while bonding capital can lead to exclusions including a lack of bridging capital, bridging capital can convert to economic capital, but may still involve exclusions and benefit community members unevenly (Leonard 2004). Conversely,

Santoro and Wilkinson (2016) used a strengths-based approach to explore how one Sudanese mother facilitated her son's bonding and bridging capitals in rural Australia. These researchers looked beyond institutional integration and success (employment and education) to see how this mother's home-making efforts and encouragement to participate in both ethnic and community networks contributed to a 'confident, academically capable, socially adept, assertive, caring, outgoing and positive' teenager (Santoro and Wilkinson 2006: 108). The particularities of lived experience, therefore, are impacted by but are not limited to structural positioning. In short, practice is important (Bottomley 1997). People live and act in the 'everyday' in relation to and with others and adapt with strong reference to not only to cultural and religious heritage but to resources, which have a commodity or value shaped by the surrounding culture (see Linnekin 1993), or 'cultures'. For example, Jackson and Nesbitt (1993 found that Hindu children in Britain were competent at 'crossing' between different cultural milieu, while maintaining an 'unconscious' reproduction of their home culture (cited in Vertovec 1996: 26-7).

Religion, and religious resettlers: belonging and emplacement

Cultural and religious continuity often make little sense separated. This is especially so for migrants, including in Australia. There is a close relationship between religious and ethnic affiliation – for example in the US, Orthodox Christianity is a 'cultural marker that signifies [national or ethnic] membership' for European immigrants (Roudemetof 2014: 122). Rangkla observed that among Buddhist Karen, religion is 'mobilised' to facilitate belonging and social and cultural lives in the new context of Thailand where they are aliens and illegals (Rangkla 2013: 9-10). In an Australian study, Hussain (2012) examined Muslim Malay students and found their ethnic and religious identity was entwined, but the latter came to the fore outside Malaysia. Belief and churchgoing have transformed due to social and cultural changes in Australia, along with declines in membership of civic and social organizations (see for instance Grace Davie's 1994 *Believing without belonging*; and authors like Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, cited in Knibbe 2013: 7, 173). Yet while 'belonging' for ethnic groups and belonging to churches and clubs has been changed in Europe and the West, faith, churches, religious groups, meetings and communities remain important (see Davie 1994, cited in Knibbe 2013; ABS 2016; Bouma 2006; Burrell 2006). Furthermore, Australian church life is being transformed and revitalised by refugees, as small congregations are joined by significant groups of first-generation migrants (Nazor 2016). Thus, civic engagement or 'social life' and religion are related (see Turner 2009: 19; van der Meulen 2012). These

trends complicate debates about the privatisation of spirituality and the secularisation thesis; that is, the debates about de-churching and the decline of institutionalised religion in modernised, rationalised, pluralised societies (see Knibbe 2013; Bouma 2006; Holmes et al 2015b; Turner 2009). Religious practice and belonging retains a relevance in Australia, and to migrant lives (see Bottomley 1997; Burrell 2006; Holmes et al 2015b; Hussain 2012), including those of displaced Karens (Horstmann 2011, cited in Rangkla 2013), and resettler Karens in Australia (Bird et al 2016; Bennett 2015).

Rangkla (2013) explores how displaced Buddhist Karen maintain familiar religious practices that constitute belonging and place-making. Rangkla (2011: 8) explains that Karens who have experienced displacement to the TBB also find 'emplacement' via social networks in these borderlands, and the creation of a 'culturally accommodating space'. Rangkla (2013) shows that for Buddhist Karen refugees on the TBB, place-making practices include Buddha veneration and rituals such as participation in festivals, ceremonies, collective gift preparation and giving. For Karenni (Red Karen), attending festivals also give a sense of 'continuity with home…[and] create and reinforce belonging and place' in Thailand (Dudley 2010: 138, 117, cited in Rangkla 2013: 20). Space and ritual are of relevance here, as *rituals* and their associated *dispositions* have connections to tradition, and the past (Knibbe 2013: 176, original emphasis). Durkheim's definition of religion was 'a unified system of beliefs *and practices*' (1964: 62, cited in Holmes 2015b: 281 emphasis added). And ritual remains important to shared belief, even in contemporary individuated expressions of spirituality (Holmes et al 2015b). Thus, while practices may receive little scholarly attention, how religious observance and home cultures entwine in new locations to form a sense of 'emplacement' for resettlers is a central curiosity in this study.

Space and place in religious resettler lives

The space of the church should be of interest to theory makers intent on examinations of place in resettler lives. Space is a central feature of human geography, where space and place are seen as 'products of human interaction', and central to belonging (Knibbe 2013: 19). Knibbe (2013), and Rangkla (2013) use Appadurai (1996) to argue that 'locality' is fragile, and must be produced, reproduced and protected (Knibbe 2013) that is, there is work going on to *produce* 'belonging' to place (Rangkla 2013). Yet localities are now complex, as globalising forces disrupt self-contained communities – meaning a disruption to the anthropologists' 'village', the homogeneity of kinship systems, and rituals (Knibbe 2013: 17-

18). For example, among Buddhist Pwo Karen on the TBB, food preparation for ceremonial purposes is undertaken by teams of about 20 men from the area who volunteer for the hot, overnight work to gain merit, but also due to the sociability it offers (Rangkla 2013). Disparate families and communities long for the familiarity and communal experiences of home villages, fractured by displacement and otherwise absent on the Thai side of the border, and so create a familiar place of practice (Rangkla 2013:19). Thus, localities can be described as constructed (Berger and Luckman 1966). Knibbe (2007: 176) nods to the work of Bourdieu (1977) to call this constructed field of practice 'the domain of the familiar':

> not necessarily community, nor necessarily ethnicity, but the field generated by the subtle everyday ways in which people recognize each other as fellow inhabitants of the same life worlds, rather than of strangers

This domain has social controls within it that have transformed. For example, on the Thai side of the border, only Thai citizens can be recognised and appointed as leaders in monasteries, even though in places a Pwo Karens has held that position for two decades (Rangkla 2013). So, while powerful actors in this domain like local laws and leaders can impact 'familiarity', practice is also powerful. So, while behaviour analysis often considers broader social processes the most powerful mediators of social trends, narrower local and group processes remain important (see Bottomley 1997; Fine 2003). For instance, in the Catholic church, priest and place are considered diminished in power as people have only distant relations to the church as institution, but people maintain a Catholic identity, and religious rituals are important to this (Knibbe 2007: 89; see Holmes et al 2015b). But peoples' ability to 'carry culture' with them is compromised (Bottomley 1984: 21). While Bourdieu's (1977) 'habitus' is useful to think about 'durable, transposable dispositions' migration is not permanent, new and old homes can vary in significance, and the social context for the creation of culture and dispositions are constructed and have temporal dimensions (see Bottomley 1984: 21).

As argued above, matters of identity, ethnic identity and transformation, and ethnic identification are a central preoccupation in migrant research. This ethnic focus is othering and problematic as inequalities can be defined without considering community or cultural priorities, and transformations in receiving communities can be ignored (Neumann 2016; Williamson 2015). Similarly, conceptualisations of integration have had an ethnic focus, looking at belonging and civic participation, rather than seeing this as a two-way social

process including the receiving community (Strang and Ager 2010; Neumann 2016). These approaches also make weak accountings for agentic action, especially place-making, among resettlers. Gill Bottomley wrote that ethnic identification is about negotiation and resistance and is set within a cultural and *practice* framework (1997), and Williamson (2015) shows how belonging is a spatial practice. In this socio-religious space theories of multicultural interaction and resettlement practices come to the fore. Religion, for both researcher and researched in this study, is highly a significant personal ontology that shapes practice and infuses life. Religion, like other belief and practice systems, are real in their effect, for those who believe (Knibbe et al 2008). Inductive, participatory research methods and theory of the middle range fit with this study's observation of religious and cultural practices (see Knibbe et al 2008: 49).

Socio-religious spaces as micro publics and spaces of encounter

As outlined in the background, religious practice and observance, through ritual and community worship and events have a role to play in resettlement, integration and civic participation. While Australians are relatively quiet about it, religion is still potent in Australia (Bouma 2006). For instance, while the 2016 Australian census records an increase in the 'no religion' response to almost a third of the population, this does not account for secular and other spiritual beliefs and the importance of religion and spirituality even in Western, secular nations (ABS 2016; Holmes et al 2015b).[25] Religion is central to cultural diversity, and religious revitalisation in Australia is related to increasing cultural diversity (along with conversion), so is accompanied by concerns around cohesion (Tacey 2003, cited in Bouma 2006). Yet ethnic identities are fluid (see Hussain 20120), and while religious elements of identity may be at once more salient and 'mobilised' for home-making (argued above) they can be less negotiable (vis 'ethnic options') due to prevailing social conditions (see Hussain 2012). For example, globalisation and technology are able to both sustain and subvert transnational networks (Castles 2002). Bouma (n.d) argues that beginning in the 70s religion was sidelined to the suburbs as churches shifted from the centre in conversation with government, to congregations in the margins - a disintegration of 'vertically integrated denominational structures'. Also, religion has experienced a concurrent shift into more public spheres in recent decades, as evidenced by religious references in politics and media (Bouma 2006). While religious identity, especially fundamentalism has become significant at in

25 The 2016 census shows the 'no religion' count increased from 22% in 2011 to 30% in the, while 52% of Australians continue to identify with some form of Christian faith (ABS 2016).

domestic and international politics (Bouma 2006; Holmes et al 2015b), it has different layers of importance at the level of lived experience. For instance, religious plurality and rejection makes catering for civic ceremonies and other needs unwieldy. Religion can be an important source of strength, and faith has been shown to contribute to Karen resettler wellbeing (Borwick et al 2013). However, a micro sociological examination of socio-religious spaces can begin to look between the broader structural patterns of religious engagement, and the narrow personal and particular, to see locally bound, small-group experience.

Micro sociology emphasises the routines and practices of actors in a space (Goffman 1966; see Fine 2003; Macionis and Plummer 2012; Neal 2015). This research focus on practice sits alongside representation and movement as features of the mobilities paradigm (see Swe 2013). This is accomplished through a focus on these spaces of interaction, or micro publics (Wise and Velayutham 2009; Amin 2008). In this micro context, multicultural interaction must be addressed (Wise and Velayutham 2009: 242). In these spaces of everyday and transnational encounters, interactions and networks are of relevance as a 'social condition' for identity formation, negotiations, and 'social setting' for reciprocity, exchange and gifts (Mauss 1925, cited in Douglas and Wildavsky 1982). These processes have potential to invoke capitals, ethics of care and the social glue of 'hidden solidarities' (Phal and Spencer 2006). Social cohesion (Simmel 1950), and the building of social bonds occurs through social interaction and acts of reciprocity and vice versa (Mauss 1925, cited in Douglas and Wildavsky 1982).

A religion-resettlement nexus has been evidenced above, and religious involvement is implicated in Karen emplacement and belonging work. Reciprocity is also central to the traditional Karen systems, with co-operative exchanges and borrowing used by village families to prepare, plant and care for crops, and central to hunting, fishing and covering the roof (Rajah 2008: 155). Rajah refers to this as a 'subsistence economy', a set of behaviours that encompass broader networks than 'kinship economies' (see Hamilton 1974: 195 cited in Rajah 2008: 131). As broader social systems of exchange play out in micro publics, socio-religious spaces like churches can be expected to contain these kinds of action. Velayutham and Wise (2005) refer to this as the moral economy (see Wise and Velayutham 2009; Wise in Neal 2015: 993). That churches can be spaces of multicultural encounter, and at the same time moral economic 'arenas' is a hopeful optic for this examination of space. The actors in these spaces operate in a 'convivial arenas' such that even excluded and marginalised groups

can develop kinship economies (Hamilton 1974, cited in Rajah 2008) and participate in a moral economy (Wise 2009; Velayutham and Wise 2005). This ability to participate in meaningful value exchanges and rituals can build on social bonds and practices that promote bridging capital towards social and cultural capitals.

Conclusion

> Crossings across racial frontiers… are the condition of possibility for solidarity (Prashad 2000), for a 'new *convivencia* (living together)' (Suarez-Navaz 2004: 191-220), and it is the task of an anthropology of the present to explore the cultural condition of not just disjuncture and difference, but also of conjuncture and convergence (Silverstein 2005: 382 original emphasis).

This chapter has moved outside stock issues in migration research around identity and integration to take a stance, around migration stage (generation), social and civic, 'space', and the symbolic nature of integration, and the agency of religious resettlers. Migrant research literature in Australia can be a-historical with a myopic emphasis on 'outcomes' (Neumann 2016) rather than process. The impetus for this research approach is a 'push back' against both the structural and 'ethnic' emphases in migrant and refugee research, and the focus on civic and economic 'outcomes' such as work, education and English. This study is situated in the middle-range 'between' the realities of social-structural positionings and migrant feelings of discomfort, 'home' or ontological security (Noble 2005). This is not so much a concern with the transnational as the 'translocal' (Wise 2011) and not so much with the personal and emotional as the interpersonal encounter and everyday practice. From this vantage point the messy processes of doing resettling, people-mixing (Wise and Velayutham 2009), conviviality (Wise and Noble 2016) and being together-in-difference (Ang 2003) can be observed. This is a sustained observation of multicultural interaction within a socio-religious space, as compared to fleeting encounters in public consumption-oriented spaces (see Amin 2008). This is not to ignore cultural dominance nor deny structure, as Wise points out, racism is evident but it 'isn't the most salient dimension of living together' (Neal 2015:990). Rather than the 'who is working and what is working' foci of resettlement and policy literature this study examines how everyday multicultural encounters can provide the 'conditions' for reciprocity and exchange (Wise and Noble 2016; Mauss 1925, cited in Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; see Chapter 4, *Inductive ethnographic methods and everyday*

multiculture). This study explores how the potential of these 'productive encounters' to invoke ethics of care, social capital and cohesion (Mauss 1925, cited in Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Phal and Spencer 2006; Simmel 1950). This invokes traditional Karen systems of reciprocity (Rajah 2008: 155) the 'hopeful' scholarship of 'everyday multiculturalism' (Wise and Velayutham 2009) and inclusion as a two-way process (Strang and Ager 2010). These theories inform the knowledge-production approaches taken as methodologies in this study.

Ch 3 Ethnographic Methodologies

> Social order is built from the actions, interpretations, and negotiations among actors, and this means that social order is amenable to observation… As an undergraduate trained by Erving Goffman (see Goffman 1983) … I understood social order as locally constituted, even if structural conditions cannot be dismissed (Fine 2003: 46)

Ethnography has been described as 'accounting for behaviour' (Agar 1980: 188-90). The emphasis here is on understanding the what and why of social action - prediction is less of an emphasis (Agar 1980: 190). Ethnographic methodology is essentially building an account; that is, developing a 'rigorous' language to allow accurate description of what a specific group is saying or doing. Agar argues that 'the goal is to have a language that allows us to both describe specific groups accurately, and to compare… different groups' (Agar 1980: 192). The theory of knowledge construction (epistemology) taken in this research was broadly symbolic interactionist, and this was entangled in the research design, and the research outcomes (Engelsman et al 2017: 8). This thesis takes as its perspective the interaction order (see Berger and Luckmann 1991; Hall 2003) and micro sociology. Interactionists draw their epistemology from symbolic interactionism, to acknowledge that the norms we live by, our gender, even our ethnicity and other ways of organising our world and navigating it, are social constructions (Berger and Luckmann 1991). This methodology is necessarily reflexive, and, in more recent ethnographic endeavours, this is native to qualitative investigation in sociology. This study is ethnographic and takes inspiration from these traditions. More specifically, it takes a theory-generating approach that draws on these traditions to sit between a personal and peopled ethnography (Fine 2003).

As ethnography is 'multiple', several flavours are described by Fine (2003), who compares his approach, a peopled ethnography, with two other models - postulated and personal ethnography. Postulated ethnography is low on empirical description in order to focus on developing theory. Fine (2003) gives Arlie Hochschild's *The managed heart* (1983) as an example as her theoretical claims about emotional labour are elaborated and tested through the observation of flight attendants' conditions of work. Fine notes that while Hochschild (1983) builds an argument from immersive observation, the ethnography is thin; we do not learn of the individual attendants and their actions and interactions (cited in Fine 2003: 56).

Compared to this, peopled ethnographies are concerned with these elements and the networks of those who 'people' the system. There are no archetypes, but William Foote Whyte's (1943/1955) street corner society (one of a few classic 'corner' ethnographies) applies the 'rich description and theoretical agenda' of peopled ethnography to understanding group status systems (cited in Fine 2003: 46). Fines' (1987) work on Little Leagues was 'peopled' by preteen boys who play baseball but was not concerned with *these* boys but about how group dynamics and team culture is created across many Little Leagues (multiple sites), and how their 'ideoculture' developed (cited in Fine 2003: 46). Fine built from this theory to understand the creation of small group culture in fantasy gamers, student chefs, restaurant workers, and mushroom collectors (see Fine 1983, 1985, 1996, 1998, cited in Fine 2003). Again, Fine is not interested in explicating sport or cooking but local interactions and local (small 'c') culture (Fine 1979, cited Fine 2003; Gary Fine pers. com. 22 March 2018). Although peopled ethnography has limited capacity to see 'hidden webs of power' observation begins with a group and takes explanation beyond them to situate interaction within broader structural forces (Fine 2003: 57). A further example is in Bird and others' (2016) description of an (animist origin) wrist-tying ceremony among a group of Brisbane Karen. The authors' description of flags and analysis of talk and action demonstrates how the ritual contains nationalistic agendas (rather than religious ones) and unity tropes (Bird et al 2016).

Personal ethnographies, in contrast, are empirical descriptions with only thin theoretical elaboration. For example, Jackall's *Wild cowboys* (1997), a vivid account of New York's police and criminal justice system, is 'pure unabashed narrative description' (cited in Fine 2003: 55). With personal ethnography personal descriptions and personal relations sit the centre of the research and dominate the reporting. Reading Jackall (1997), Fine says 'we come to know these scenes and these peoples' (2003: 55). This emic-etic intimacy is central to rigor (Fine 2003), richness, and interpretation. Ethnographic methods facilitate knowing participants 'in action' (Santoro and Wilkinson 2016). Especially in cross-cultural research, familiarity is due to time, observation and participation – each is key to rigor (Laverack and Brown 2003, cited in Irvine et al 2008: 37). Participation is also key to rigor in research on religion (Knibbe et al 2012). Where my research sits in terms of a peopled or personal ethnography can be explicated by reference to a summary of Fine's seven (7) features of peopled ethnography (see Fine 2003: 52-55), next.

Personal or peopled ethnography?

Fine's description of a peopled ethnography is 1) theoretical or conceptual and 2) emphasises theory building. These features are common to this study, as I do develop concepts and a rigorous descriptive language (Agar 1980). However, this study is closer to a personal ethnography where empirical rather than theoretical description prevails. While my research speaks to the theoretical (and due to my sociological training, it dwells on the methodological), like personal ethnography my description is detailed and intended as an end in itself. Like Jackall (1997), I developed relations in the field to reveal these scenes and these people in detail. Unlike Jackall, however, I do not absent my voice nor neglect to provide 'a set of contentions with which others might argue' (Fine 2003: 56). This research remained very open and inductive, rather than imposing assumptions on the setting (including from identity theory), which in any case did not 'fit' the 'data', nor these resettlers. Fine (2003) says 3) a peopled ethnography examines sustained interaction in a small group setting where people engage in talk and shared action, rather than more liminal or anonymous spaces. A church congregation is just such a shared space of action. My research is ethnographic in that I went to where the people are (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 735), and it was sustained in that it spanned four years. This was important as the focus was action and interaction in a space where ongoing relations are dynamic but consequential in peoples' lives (see Fine 2003: 53; Wise and Velayutham 2009, cf Wise 2010). The main departure of this study Fine's peopled ethnography is that Fine's work was 4) multi sited, to avoid making conclusions based on 'some unique peculiarity… of members or setting' (2003: 53). Fine (2003) used local, particular groups, but examined for patterns across a range of groups in similar sites (for example, Fine (1979, cited Fine 2003) examined the esoteric culture of Little League by observing several different teams). While I research across multiple sites like Fine (public and private services, plus home visits), I do focus on *this* space when I consider out-group interactions between groups. Also, while there are different congregations ('Anglo', Karen, Filipina, Anuak) that are actually fluid and overlapping groups, it is on *these* Karens (plural intended) that I remain focused. So, interaction and settling patterns are likely to be particular to this church and conclusions will be particular to this group, at this stage in resettlement. This limits generalisability, but that is subordinate to substantive findings and related aims.

Peopled ethnography is 5) based on extensive observation. My research was as sustained as possible (within postgraduate time constraints) in order to build detail into the data

presentation. The field work met benchmarks set by Fine for immersion – I became an 'expected participant in group life' – a member who shares a joke or personal news, and not an 'ethnographic tourist' (Fine 2003: 53-4). As the main field was a public church setting, and subsidiary fields were associated events and friendship, I kept attending (to) these, over four years, and until I could more or less predict events in the next setting and my note taking petered out accordingly (cf Fine 2003). Peopled ethnography is 6) richly ethnographic and field notes are detailed descriptions, often published to show artefacts, action and talk – these are the 'detailed accountings' and 'glittering instances' that create theory (Fine 2003: 57). My research adheres to this with detailed scenes and accompanying analysis. The departure from this is that a single site created ethical dilemmas for high-level description. In any case, while people have been aggregated into 'types' for anonymity, peopled ethnography emphasises the instance over the individual and structural (Fine 2003: 57). This relates to the final feature, that 7) peopled ethnography distances researcher and researched. I tend towards personal ethnography here, in that I do not claim moral neutrality nor the 'ironic detachment from informants' that Fine strives for (2003: 54 original emphasis). This is likely because this research was alert to beneficence, so close relations with people of a refugee-background, rather than children in team sports or adults in cooking classes, developed. I do follow Fine in qualifying that the individuals in the research, the local Karen as a group, are not 'captured' by the research, nor do I claim to be their biographer or spokesperson. Representations are from my interpretation of this group of people, at this time. Personal ethnography consists of personal descriptions and personal relations and the incorporation of participation, intimacy and familiarity is central to the rigor in this study (cf Fine 2003; Irvine et al 2008; Knibbe et al 2012).

In short, my research emphasises detailed description over conceptualisation but speaks to the theoretical in that it proposes new conceptual language. This ethnography was sustained, immersive and reflexive, encompassed multiple sites and dynamic groups who are 'consequential' to each other's lives (Fine 2003: 53). These features are akin to Fine's (2003) peopled ethnography while incorporating features of personal ethnography with an enriched analysis. Fine (2003) proposes this mix of analysis and action forms a strong base for model ethnography. While a term like emergent or immersive ethnography would fit the research and data presented here, those terms would not perhaps depart enough from the character of

ethnography generally[26]. The term friendship ethnography is proposed here to express this study, and to serve as a model.

Limitations of friendship ethnography

This research methodology falls short of the model peopled ethnography as it is less generalizable from a single church site and congregation 'set', while other Karen communities and congregational sets abound. Lack of breadth can be accounted for by a few factors. The first is resource limitations of graduate research, both with the researcher and the researched community, and ethics (explored in detail at the end of the Methods). Ethical requirements and the collapsing of persons limits the hallmark ethnographic depth, and 'showing' individual persons as may be possible with personal ethnography. But exploring resettlement and engagement in the socio religious space allowed a view of particular Tasmanians (the Karen group), multicultural interaction (the diverse groups), and transversals (the individuals). The second limit on breadth is that a focus on multicultural interaction in religious space was emergent (and hidden from Australian scholarship), so took time to incorporate into the design. Just like natural friendship, friendship ethnography takes time to develop shared understandings, and is two-way (see Tillmann-Healy 2003; below). The friendship ethnography, then, sits between peopled and personal ethnography to present both intricate instances of persons as 'multi-dimensional people', and people as a group (Fine 2003: 55). This friendship ethnography includes rich descriptive accounts from sustained participatory observation. From this participation, close relationships and theoretical propositions developed. This ethnography is immersive enough to show fine-grain detail of the group, but also reflexive in including the researcher in the field-of-view. The researcher resources vis this group, and the social capitals among Australian Karens themselves, are growing rapidly such that while this research attempts to paint a picture of a moving target, more actors will soon be on hand to pull more lived experience into the field of view. So, while the description and conceptual work add to knowledge they also form base material for further work.

[26] Collaborative ethnography (see Lassiter 2005), and itinerant ethnography - shallowly described by Schein as a combination of ephemeral or incidental but personal, multisite, and mobile ethnography (see Schein 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, cited in Eldridge 2008) – are also alternative models, but do not fit the features of this research.

Developing theory in ethnography

Agar (1980) explains that 'mysterious' ethnographic procedures have two distinct levels of theorising. The first level is what is actually done, for example a system of rules developed in order to 'transform what you see and hear into intelligible accounts' (Agar 1980: 188-91). The next, perhaps deeper level, is theorising around why these procedures are chosen - in other words, how these procedures are a response to particular socio-political, historical or economic context (Agar 1980: 188-91). The next section (Section 1) deals with theorising at Agar's second level, examining how the research procedures evolved responsively to the context of the Tasmanian Karen. The section following that (Section 2) will look at rigor in participant observation (friendship ethnography), vis the first level of analysis. Data analysis strategies, conversely, are detailed in the Methods.

Section 1: methodological findings and reflections

Second-level analysis of methods, ethics and inductive design in ethnography

Preamble

This next section deals with matters that have been the bane of my existence throughout the study. Late in my fourth year I gained the clarity to categorise these ill-fitting findings that emerged during the conduct and design of the research. These reflections on the emergent design (see Babb 2006; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006) and ethical process of the research I term 'methodological findings' as they do not rightly fit either methods or findings reporting, but both. Borrowing strategies from anthropologists – especially language-learning - I allowed the reticence, hospitality and life circumstances of these Karens to guide the research (cf Agar 1980:188-91). Of primary concern, initially, was that I would not be able to interview. I learnt early that sophisticated or even direct questions would not elicit responses from all but a few of the local Karen. My efforts to formally interview and to hear stories were made impossible by language limitations, or rebuffed – in particular ways I discuss here. However, while these features of the research were personally and methodologically challenging, the extensive participatory observation I undertook in the context of friendships ultimately assisted me to both see and make this account of Karen resettlement to Tasmania. As language is central to culture and norms 'language awareness' is key, and research without shared language presents challenges that need to be accounted for (Irvine et al 2008: 36). Cross-language research should consider 'the appropriateness of communication styles' and use participants' own language where possible (Im et al 2004, cited in Irvine 2008: 41).

This section only explores induction and 'design' challenges here with a focus on language (and culture), while further reflexive sections follow the findings to give a complete picture of the successes and challenges of friendship ethnography with 'language exchange' as a key method (see Chapter 3). A brief outline of early field work is needed next.

A stranger with an agenda

In the earliest weeks of my field work, two issues or needs presented themselves. First, among the Tasmanian Karen I was initially a stranger with an agenda (Agar 1980). I worked to overcome this strangeness by constant attendance at Karen events. Within a few months of attending TFC, and after I discovered I had no willing interpreters among this small group, I undertook to create a new photo board for the congregation. This assisted my rapport with Karens and the regulars[27], and assisted people across the congregations to learn names and family forms. I wanted to become part of the furniture and for my research agendas to fade into the background (Roberta Julian, pers. com. 1 Nov 2015). The photo board project operated to mark my position in the community as a contributing member. I built up these tokens (Goffman 1969:87) to express my involvement: consistent attendance at Karen events - often wearing the Karen clothing I was gifted - weekly language lessons, regular visits and phone contact. The second need was the need for a shared language between myself and Karens. Initially, the level of English among the Tasmanian Karen seemed startlingly low. As a result, I established regular contact with two Karen families to exchange language – first Sgaw (learning) by invitation, and English (teaching) by request. Addressing both of these practical needs fulfilled key ethical and epistemological mandates. In the former case, it allowed me to interact respectfully, with sensitivity to language and needs, while providing research beneficence in the form of much-desired English language practice (see Watkins et al 2012; Irvine et al 2005). In the latter, it afforded sustained interaction with the Tasmanian Karen, and those regulars and other local interactants.

Consent: from failures to friendship

The ethics application for this study was approved over a series of three submissions to the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (SS HREC) from October 2014 to January 2015 (reference number H0014292). At the committee's request I had forms translated into Sgaw (see Appendix H) by a small Melbourne business, costing over $700. I complied with requests by TFC members to obtain signature permissions from individuals for

[27] I refer to these non-Karen Baptists as members, regulars or locals - despite problems with each term.

photography as it occurred, and to register as working with vulnerable people[28]. I showed the information and consent forms to a Karen leader and he read them and confirmed with me they were 'ok'. He did point out one word was not quite right and suggested another term would be 'more polite'. I was able to determine the word was in a sentence inviting participants to take part. In order to make the change on a word processor I downloaded the Sgaw script (Karen Normal Unique^{TM}), and copied and pasted the correct characters from elsewhere in the document. In January 2015, at the Karen service conducted in Sgaw, I arranged with a leader to talk about my research. I had been attending services there since October the previous year. In that time, I had spoken to a number of Karen that I had come to know over the previous months, including two of the key leaders. They had given a positive reaction to the proposed study; a couple of young fathers felt it would be 'very good!', and when I questioned a group of teens about its suitability they conveyed that yes, 'it would be ok'. That summer day, I was invited to the stage at a suitable place in the proceedings, and spoke simply about the understanding I had already of their lives so far, and how I would like to know more, from their stories. I asked if they would be willing to tell me their stories. I told them they could talk about the past, but that I was more interested in their time in Tasmania. I had carefully prepared short phrases, and the leader interpreted for me on the spot. I let the congregation know my university required them to sign a form first, and I had one for each family, with their names written on the top. I placed these on a table at the back of the church and they were all collected after the service. No-one asked any questions of me, but one man noted I had invited only him, not his children – I apologised and clarified that everyone was invited (the form was hand addressed with parents' names then 'and family'[29]).

While visiting the TBB I had experienced Karens, like many South Asians, were likely to be agreeable and say 'yes, yes' to be polite, but without the attached intention. Significantly, however, the Karen community interpreter – also a community leader with small children, and full-time paid work - quickly indicated to me he and they (the community) would be 'too busy' to take part. This leader went on to say that for Karens Sundays were 'too busy', using

28 This is a State government-regulated process where volunteers or paid workers involved in child-related activities can be requested by employers and organisations to undergo a police check to obtain a registration card (see www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sr-2014-068).

[29] I used the church directory as a source for names. This was an imperfect method, as over the years, despite frequent editions, the directory was inaccurate (spelling), and slow to catch up with household combinations, additions and dissolutions (including many moving away). One church member had carefully curated an additional and more accurate annotated directory, since 2008 as each family arrived and each baby was born.

a Western sounding reason to intimate the laborious work my proposals about storytelling and translation might entail, and the likely priority people placed on their churchgoing. Indeed, churchgoing did emerge as sacred time, a valued way to be together that Karens would pursue even if unwell, that would extend well into the afternoon, though they had begun with the 10am service that morning. Thus, my first challenge to recruitment was the loss of an anticipated interpreter collaboration on the research I initially proposed. As the use of interpreters can invoke a whole set of other difficulties and limitations (see Twinn 1997, cited in Irvine et al 2008; Liamputtong 2008), I was already aware that using this community leader to interpret could negatively impact Karen congregation members from sharing frankly with me. I had interrogated the TIS (Australian Government-funded Translating and Interpreting Service – available as a free hotline) on two prior occasions and found they were unable to provide a Karen-language interpreter, only providing service in Burmese (April 2015)[30]. What was not immediately apparent, but quickly became evident as I considered community capacities, was that research was outside the purview of these resettlers.

Hedging

The Tasmanian Karen would regularly employ what I came to understand or describe as 'hedging'. For instance, any request to hear their story, or less so, to visit their home and talk with them directly about the research as a family unit was met by this 'hedging' behaviour. Karens did struggle to understand my requests (in English), but, those who I could determine were most clear about my intentions, would begin to politely put me off. Often, there was no refusal in their answer, simply a sense of discomfort that did not accompany other conversations (see reflexive conclusion). As the following scenes show, I used a mixture of strategies to communicate, and this is when I discovered this polite hedging;

> Naw smiled at me so I went over, her little girls accosting me with cute smiles and questions. I had my diary open in my hand, intending to ask their mother for a visit. I greeted her, said I would like to visit, is that ok. I

[30] I later discovered the church had used the TIS early on in their involvement with the Karens to resolve an issue causing some agitation at the time. It took several difficult meetings using the TIS service to determine the Karens were concerned that lay people distributed the communion, as Buddhist Karen would attend and could take the offered bread and juice (many churches limit communion distribution to leaders and appointed laypersons, and partaking to those who share and demonstrate faith by public declaration and (often) baptism by immersion). The compromise reached was to ask Karens to serve their own people (see Findings – Scene 1, 2).

> used the phrase I'd heard other Karens use 'are you available?' I said, can I come to visit Monday? Or maybe Wednesday? It was unclear if she understood, but I showed her the days in the diary. Tomorrow, Monday, (I pointed to the day) or one, two three days – Wednesday? I pointed to the days in turn. She pointed to the Wednesday and I said *morning*, *afternoon*? Are you available? She said afternoon in English and I said one o'clock, two o'clock? She said two o'clock, and I was relieved to have a reply. Two o'clock came and went at Naw's house on Wednesday. She was out on a driving lesson so I hung out with Pi and Pu who were with the girls – they all loved the visit and it included a trip to the community garden with Pi, so the day wasn't wasted. But I couldn't explain about the research. (Field journal February 2015)
>
> Therah Mu came up excitedly after the service, how are you, we exchanged greetings. I asked her if she had seen my letter (consent form). She said, almost as a side issue they don't want to tell their stories. Oh, I said. Yes, she said, but if you want to, I can talk to my friends for you. I can talk them for you. I said no, no its ok. Only the people who say yes, its ok, I said. (Field journal March 2015).

While communication difficulties could be blamed for misdirection in these scenes, the first typifies many interactions in the early fieldwork stages – people were not home, or if they were, they would promise to take part 'later'. On the later occasion above, this Karen mother confirmed a growing suspicion: these Karens did not want to tell their stories. I was horrified at the risk of coercion, and my concern was heightened as this mother was a teacher, was not originally resettled to Tasmania, and I was uncertain of her ethnicity (for instance, she spoke to her husband in Burmese). It did not matter how much I emphasised that the Tasmania chapter was the focus: I found these Karen stories could not be separated from the past, and that stories are private and low priority. With decolonised methodologists ringing in my ears, my intention was to navigate, but not breach the boundaries the Karens established. It was during these early investigations that I became aware of the obscure nature of the boundary around Karen private lives. Boundary setting and thus investigation was not a comfortable place for these Karens – they would answer briefly, bemused or with a rare look of consternation. Much later other comments confirmed this for me. On a house visit one day in

late 2017, I was socialising with a single mother who spoke to me about her smoking. She smoked to forget the past, she said, and laughed it was only a shame it also made her forget English. This is a classic example of making an issue 'light', while presenting a stance. While some resettled Karens share stories with each other to avoid forgetting the past, these biographies were tightly guarded. But this 'hedging' served early on as a warning light, and later as a hand break on certain research inquiries. At the same time, my indoctrination in research ethics gave me pause which facilitated the time perhaps to develop friendships and a sensitivity to the subtle hedging.

Methodology for emergent friendship methods

While decolonised methodologies tout 'engagement' as a gold standard in research with 'minorities', the ability and willingness to be 'engaged' will vary with each group. While my own 'involvement' and 'engagement' was a source of almost too much interest from non-Karen churchgoers, and welcomed privately and celebrated by leaders publicly, any press for stories, and any probing, was met with hedging – this subtle resistance from Karens that was mostly non-verbal and took some time to come to understand. Creating 'a space to speak' is constructed in critical race research as broadly positive (see Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). But in this case, Karen used their agency to create and maintain a space of silence. Wolf explores this resistance, reflecting that 'those who carry culture, and those who desperately want to understand it may participate in a minuet of unspoken negotiations that totally reverses the apparent balance of power' (1992: 134).

Critical, participatory, and decolonised methods operate to 'speak for' and 'give voice', while with friendship as method 'researchers *get to know* others in meaningful and sustained ways' (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 733 original emphasis). Researchers must follow the determinations of the researched as to what access to their lives they would make available. The desire to tell one's story, to speak of one's history and to be heard is considered cathartic, storytelling universal to human society (Macionis and Plummer 2012: 83). But Karens have experienced acute trauma (see Schweitzer et al 2011; Chapter 1). When the distressed are silent this can signal avoidance or disempowerment; but silence can be strategic, used to contain hurt and show gratitude and deference (Nduna and Jewkes 2011). Research, particularly participatory methods (PAR), asks for time, engagement and emotional outputs. In PAR, 'active participation' is the gold standard, but refugees may esteem participation in different ways, and more for the empowerment and knowledge it offers (van der Velde et al 2009). For

example, the appeal of PAR is that it emphasises the creation of a 'communicative space' (Gaya, Wicks and Reason 2009). Gaya and colleagues argue the formation of 'space to speak' is a crucial early step for successful action research inquiries, yet some refugees and resettlers prefer silence, are reticent to speak, and may not always appreciate such a space (see Couch et al 2010). For much other research, researchers rarely approach groups and ask which research method would suit them (Engelsman et al 2017).

Ethical researchers must consider the meaning of participation, and the implications of asking participants to break their silence. PAR inquiries aim to 'produce knowledge directly useful to those being studied' (Macionis and Plummer 2012: 733), and what seemed useful to these resettlers was something practical – knowing English and navigating the world with English. Not sitting down to share (trauma) stories but sharing lives and the language that comes with that. My would-be participants invited me to worship with them, offered Karen lessons, asked for English lessons, lavishly appreciated my visits (scolding if I left it too long), eagerly welcomed my service attendance and gratefully accepted help with practical matters as they arose. 'Help', and teaching English, were unsurprisingly central to my activities with Karens (see also Watkins et al 2012); alongside service attendance and eating. So, I joined in and wrote down observations. In short, I felt that asking this relatively small group to do PAR would burden people and leaders too much, and this was confirmed by the leaders' assertion around being 'busy'. Resettlers are indeed busy and proactive (Manjikian 2010; see also Burrell 2006); arrivals are contiguous, many are still reeling from relocation, and – especially with Karens, family problems and needs are largely met within the community (Baptist Union representative, pers. com. May 2017; STARTTS 2009). Karens in Burma have been characterised as notoriously independent, never accepting outsider intervention or assistance though coercion but only slowly, 'through the medium of relationship' (Rogers 2004: 213). For the Tasmanian Karen, at the moment, their history belongs to them alone and is not something to be shared in a broader context, at this time. As one of my closest Karen friends, told me, while hedging around telling me his story, he did have a desire to 'one day' write his own story down himself. But that time, he clearly expressed to me, has not yet come[31].

[31] I have begun to assist writing this story (February 2018), so I have come to know this friend's family of origin, what his siblings are doing, if parents are alive and where they live, how he came to faith and chose a field of study, how many years he was displaced and in a refugee camp, how his family members took different pathways to Tasmania at different times (and why), and details like current household structure and aspirations.

I needed to find a subtler approach to understanding the complex social world of these Karens; one robust enough to allow me access to the interpretations pertinent to their resettled lives (see Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005: 56), but less invasive, less formalised. This approach needed to respect the 'minuet of unspoken negotiations', which pulled a curtain over stories and the past but opened the way for relationships and language-exchange, evoking their focus now on an English-dominated future. I decided to participate and observe as much as possible, thinking Karen costume and other objects could symbolise identity and change (cf Borwick et al 2013). The explorations I made in this direction, focused on identity and story, fell flat, while participation, ritual and language exchange bubbled over with life. I soon found a lot of support from two Karen families when we struck up a friendship over language exchange. One family, notably, was not opposed to telling me their stories, and shared highlights and dates, rather than details, of these immediately (see Methods - migratograph for this data). The methods in this research were inductive and occupied a liminal space between 'yes' and 'no', that in fact other researchers have encountered (see Eldridge 2008), including with Karens (see Bird 2016; Couch et al 2010; Methods). Overall, rather than asking for participants in my research, I took the role of participant in their lives in order to be useful and see for myself the process of resettlement and the solvency of these resettlers.

Methodology from everyday multiculture

The approach in this study contained many similar qualities to the empirical research conducted by Wise (2005; 2008), Wise and Velayutham (2014), and compiled by Wise and Velayutham (2009) in *Everyday Multiculturalism*. While not perhaps explicitly proposed as a distinct method, this is a comprehensive research orientation that is 'empirically led and immersed in the everyday' (Neal 2015: 988). These ethnographic projects were about 'just being there' over long timeframes (months, years) to gather the intricate details of a situational encounter (Neal 2015: 994). For example, Wise and Velayutham (2014) compared local multicultural encounters and cohesion in Sydney with Singapore, and have observed such encounters in other 'contact zones' like schools and playgrounds, lunchrooms and front yards (see Neal 2015). Wise explains this approach seeks the 'sensual qualities' of difference and while it yields an intimate portrait of a few representative characters it is not interested just in individuals or groups, but 'mid-level encounters' in the routines of places (Neal 2015: 992). As this approach can deal with the ambivalence, contradictions and complexity found in real life (Neal 2015), it is these qualities I bring to considerations of observation, next.

Section 2: reflections on validity and analysis

Validity and participatory ethnographic methods (participant observation)

> Observation is experience and gets around the narrations of what people think they do, which differs from what they actually do (Pink et al 2016: 242).

The advantage of participant observation is that it 'puts you where the action is' (Bernard 2011: 343 cited in Musante 2014: 252). Participant observation is particularly suited to sociological inquiry that seeks to understand an organisation or problem inductively - where the feeling and experience of a certain life is unknown, and not easily accessed in other ways (see Becker 1958:652-53). Participant observation is the keystone of cultural anthropology and early sociology and offers a way to learn and understand the significance of ritual (see Rangkla 2013), and both tacit and explicit aspects of the daily lives, routines, interactions and culture of a group of people (Musante 2014; Pink et al 2016). Participant observation is 'hanging out' joining in on the usual and unusual activities, so has a 'serendipitous and opportunistic flavour' (Musante 2014: 259). According to Becker (1958:652)

> the participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the group or organization he [sic] studies. He watches the people he is studying to see what situations they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He enters into conversation with some or all of the participants in these situations and discovers their interpretations of the events he has observed.

Participant observation is often adopted with subcultures and can be the only way to build trust with those unwilling to formally participate (Musante 2014: 259). Trust can be a difficult issue for refugees and those of refugee-background due to past and present experiences of mistrust (Ni Raghallaigh 2013). Trust is built by participation, not simply 'lurking' as is possible with communities including online (see Hine 2000 or Constable 2003, cited in Musante 2014: 259). My participation was a partaking in the resettled subculture: engaging in rituals, exchanges, language-learning, battles with bureaucracy (calling service providers) and eating rice and innards. Entering into conversations, especially to 'discover interpretations' was not straightforward. But, as Picchi observes, active engagement in social life affords a rich and diverse insights, as 'adjusting to a new culture' can mean the researcher avoids a selective focus on one aspect of traditional life (1992: 144 cited in Musante 2011: 258). The active engagement of participant observation is often facilitated by only a few key

relationships (see Musante 2014: 247 who cites Alter 2000; Behar 1993, 1996; Dumont 1991; Shostack 1983). Relationships sit alongside participation and observation as solid ground for an iterative analytical process. Assumptions and questions and interpretations are recorded and developed and redeveloped as the field sites and people are continuously revisited and challenged and 'resisted' by the action and dialogue (Musante 2014: 258, 261 paraphrasing Becker 1970 and Grills 1998: 4).

Musante (2014: 251) cautions that participant observation sparks debate about rigor and how research can be held up to a 'fair test'. For instance, Becker acknowledges that observation alone cannot access intentions and motivations for behaviour and they may be misinterpreted – yet this may be appropriate where overt behaviour rather than issues of meaning is the focus. While Becker does note that participatory observation approaches are difficult to systematise (1958:653), Musante argues the difference between every day and research observation is a formal analysis process - the systematic use of data (2014: 252). Fine (2003) acknowledges that interpersonal behaviours can seem too particular and unpredictable to allow generalisation. Concerns about validity, however, accompany the knowledge-claims of all interpretive work (Polkinghorne 2007).

To address questions of validity, the analytical operations of observation studies need to be explained in sufficient detail to allow a reader to see the how the research was conducted and how conclusions were reached. The issue here is 'how to present *proof*' (Becker 1958:660 original emphasis; see Fine 2003). As the process of data analysis is taken up and dealt with in the methods chapter, here I simply propose to follow Becker in giving a 'a description of the 'natural history' of [my] conclusions' (Becker 1958: 660). In other words, this discussion of methodology, and the following methods and findings will together represent successive stages of the research and show how the data developed into its final form. Not all the data can be given due to complexity and ethics (for example visual data), but descriptions of each key area of observation, and any exceptions I found, will represent the findings, and can be presented along with the inferences and conclusions drawn from each. Becker affirms this approach should give the reader adequate access to data and proofs, to determine the degree of confidence in each assertion or conclusion (1958: 660).

The implementation of this research was an ongoing process of bending the research approach to fit through the narrow linguistic space that was available between myself and Karens, and to a mostly-observing ethnographer. Additionally, although throughout my ethics

application and in approaching the community I stressed my focus on contemporary experiences, the inextricable link between their stories of resettlement and their traumatic past meant that these Karen were consistently, but very subtly, unwilling to engage with formal interviews. In this chapter, I have teased out this unwillingness I call 'hedging', and emphasise the inductive nature of the methods. Thus, my tone is reflexive and I incorporate a 'retrospective sense-making of fieldwork' (Magolda 2000). These reflexive elements connect design choices with the ethical and practical constraints of the field, in a discursive manner. That said, I intend in the next chapter to give a sense of the field and how I and the Tasmanian Karen negotiated and participated in the space - and how this changed over time and relates to friendships. Work on interpretation, and the methods employed in the (substantive) analysis is covered at the end of the methods chapter, next. How I actually interpreted certain aspects of behaviour and speech, using examples, is exemplified throughout and in more detail in the findings. The Methods chapter gives detail of participants, describes observations and other research-related activities, before returning to a reflexive tone to consider ethics and beneficence in a friendship as methods section.

Ch 4 Emergent Methods

> when studying biographical experience …working ethnographically with participants in their settings over time offers the best conditions for story telling (Riessman 2008: 26).

Preamble

This chapter outlines the emergent methods of this friendship ethnography. To my further chagrin, the construction of this methods chapter would not follow familiar formula of who, what, when – as with the methodology, research outcomes kept butting into the discussion of the research process. The aim of this chapter is not to be as concise, but neither as 'cold' an account as counterparts in deductive work. Therefore, throughout this methods chapter some findings, which have directed the work, are necessarily outlined. These are the inductive methods of an unfolding ethnography, or perhaps these can also be categorised as methodological findings, while substantive findings are in their assigned chapter (Chapter 5). This chapter firstly covers the multiple 'modes' of data collecting that were used. These were concentrated in, but not limited to 12 months of fieldwork. The modes emerged as the ethnography progressed, and each method contributed to the findings so the 'different' modes actually overlap. For example, conducting English lessons was often an opportunity to socialise over tea, so the separate modes *la pa ti dor deh* (drinking tea and talking) and language exchange overlapped. Friendship as method, first proposed by Tillmann-Healy (2001 cited in Tillmann-Healy 2003; see Hesse-Biber 2001), is the key for the overarching methods inductively chosen for this study.

Inductive ethnographic methods

Data collection for this study centred on participant observation - with attendant face to face conversations. My early fieldwork suggested I would need a very subtle, personal approach to this most private of peoples. Thus, while I followed principles from Wise and others research on everyday multiculture (discussed in Chapter 3), this approach was tempered by the willingness of the Tasmanian Karen to share their lives. Thus, a friendship ethnography gave Karens the ability to invite and guide me if not to those places that afforded me the best view of their lives, then to places they felt most comfortable. This means I did a lot of attending church and church-like events, hanging out with Karens and listening to Sgaw, as the Tasmanian Karen are almost all Baptists and life revolves around gathering to pray, sing,

and read the Bible in Sgaw. Thus, my observations occurred almost every week, up to five times a week, between October 2014 and November 2016. Just as deeper conversation can occur once the interviewer switches off the tape recorder (Pink et al 2016: 238), I continue to attend two public services each month and to teach and learn language (biweekly, to date), and many key insights arose from this immersive practice. The different settings for these observations are described in more detail below. In addition, I completed a photo board project, and hosted feedback sessions with Karens and with the other church-goers. I taught English to a Karen mother and her family and assorted neighbours for over a year. These meetings at Naw's house for language lessons or visits regularly involved eating 'tradition food' – a shared meal - and *bwah ow la pa ti dor deh* ('we drink tea and talk'). Sitting on the floor with green tea, and often a bowl of savoury snacks or seeds in the shell is a Karen institution – and a very successful, indirect, informal but polite way to interact. Family and food are central to relationship (see Rogers 2004; Phan 2010). Even business relationships are built from an initial session of betel nut cracking and casual conversation – even pressing matters may not be directly addressed with newcomers (see Rogers 2004: 231). Several months into my church attendance and lessons I was, however, able to conduct one semi-formal interview with a family unit (eleven people were present, eight adults), and used visual elicitation to talk about refugee journeys, and created a 'macrograph' to visually depict their different journeys (see Appendix F). During and after the intensive period of field work, I spoke at length with, or interviewed many non-Karen in the community in relation to Karen resettlement. Finally, I used seven years of the church directory, plus a private directory kept by one church member, to make sense of Karen community in and out flows, family demographics and so on. The processes I undertook in each of the main areas (participant observation, language exchange, photo board, migratograph, *la pa ti dor deh,* and (non-Karen) feedback sessions) are detailed in turn in the next section of this chapter (*multimodal methods*), after a description of the participants.

Participants

As participant details have been aggregated, Karen participant details are limited to the community profile, and findings where themes and representations are contained. Aside from Karen participants, in formal feedback sessions and casual conversations I learnt a lot from non-Karen members of the congregation. I refer to these non-Karen Baptists as members, regulars or locals - despite problems with each term. A small number of people who were key actors in Karen resettlement and support also became informants in the research. Key

settlement support people, which include Karen, I call transversals. The term member, especially, collapses diverse people and so regrettably ignores both diverse cultural backgrounds and overlap in roles, in order to de-identify individuals. For example, the term Karen and Anglo could denote different groups, but these terms would gloss other diversities in the church such as second-generation Filipino. The ethical dilemmas that accompany so few characters are that they are highly re/identifiable, and I may over identify with the participants (see Wise in Neal 2015: 994; reflexive conclusion). To further de-identify these participants I have had to conflate certain details. For instance, I do not tie participants to their different refugee camp origins but use Mae La camp each time. I present non-Karen church leaders as if they were just members – furthermore, the TFC had five leadership changes during the research period. I present supporters of Karen from the congregation as if the group were responsible when in fact certain individuals had particular stable roles. For instance, one transversal was engaged strongly with resourcing and supporting Karen to access and maintain their plot at the local community garden, while different others were frequent attenders at Karen house celebrations. I do not tease out these individuals although their contribution to Karen lives and the research varied (see Findings Part 1). Central to the participants and the design of this research was language proficiency, so this will be outlined here.

Mother tongue literacy

Most Tasmanian Karen identify as Sgaw Karen and almost all speak and function in Sgaw (a distinct Karen language), but literacy depends on age and background. Many humanitarian arrivals from Burma enter Australia with disrupted schooling, and stateless Karen are 75% less likely to attend primary school than Thai citizens (van Waas 2010 cited in Windle and Miller 2012: 317; see Arnall 2015). There are both White and Red Karen among the group, indicating origins from southern Kayin State and the smaller central Kayah State respectively. These differences fade in Australia, excepting that ‘Pwo is hard’ - they are mutually unintelligible languages - so Sgaw is used by the group. A few Tasmanian families are Pwo, so they do not always attend services at TBC. There are older men and families who are of a different faith or denomination, so this explains their occasional attendance. Other Karens, mostly young men are marginal to TFC and the Karen church, but attend the home services hosted in homes (see Findings Part 2). One Pwo teenager, however, has completed primary school in Australia, speaks English almost without accent and is a keen Sunday School leader. It is common for visiting pastors to be Sgaw, or apologise they do not speak

Sgaw but then simply preach in that language, with a smattering of English. Most of the adults including young adults are literate in the script-based language. The adults including young adults can read and write -including song writing, but all have great difficulty composing written English. The very old are likely to have missed out on education in villages, to have stayed in villages and in farming roles when younger people moved about to access schooling, and many have poor eyesight. Several Tasmanian Karens have Bible and teacher training as Karens quickly established some classes, a church and then a school in the camps upon arrival. Therah explained that people accustomed to the work of subsistence farming found they had 'no work' as rice and other supplies were provided. Karens villagers had always used spare time to access education and so seized the opportunities this afforded to establish whatever education was available from the people with them. They asked the camp administrator for a place to hold church and were allowed the use of a large rice store. Within the first year of arriving in Tasmania (2008) these Karen established a Saturday Sgaw school for children at Therah Mu's house until it was replaced by Sgaw Sunday School in early 2018 [32]. The school focused on Sgaw (script and alphabet), and literacy was taught by rote (repetition and chanting) and with songs, prayers and basic testing. Therah teaches Sgaw privately (unpaid): in 2016 he had eight Karen in high-school (and myself) studying the script and held an end-of-year test[33]. For youth, participation in the Karen youth group (conducted in Sgaw), hinges on their literacy with the script as song writing and singing is in Sgaw (see Findings Part 2). On reaching school age, children develop age-appropriate spoken language but have English literacy that appears to quickly overtake their Sgaw.

Multi-modal methods

Participant observation

The field I observed and participated in consisted of two types of settings. The first, a 'congregational setting' occurred both in the TFC chapel, and private homes. As a

[32] The Saturday School either ceased or shifted to being held on Sunday (i.e; is now a Sunday School). The school content was already a mix of cultural and Christian teachings and I observed children leaving the Karen service for a (new) Sunday School in early 2018. This is likely a compromise so that more children can participate as numbers at the Saturday school already exceeded domestic spaces; plus at the end of 2017 four single mothers arrived with four children each. A Sunday class means teachers are absent from the Sunday service, but is likely a lesser travel burden; Karens 'feel sorry' about the burdens of the group and events.

[33] Testing was conducted in Sgaw, and covered listening comprehension, writing and alphabet recitation.

congregation or large group, Karens hold a weekly service in Sgaw, at TFC each Sunday morning. They hold celebration services there also, and variety or music concerts follow these, or are held on a Saturday night. Almost all the Karens – about 30 adults, 18 children and 20 youth – also attend the regular 10am service at TFC, in English, every week. Those Karens who attend church on Sunday will then gather for the Karen service (11:30am – 1pm), then drive to a second 'home church' gathering at a home for a further service with readings, prayer, singing and offerings (around 2pm to 4pm). Sometimes this home service will be held in one of the back rooms of the church, to lessen the burden on hosts' and their neighbours in terms of the crowd, noise and cars on the street. Meeting in a back room has increased as the congregation grows, although attendees are now equally if not more cramped in the space available. The Sunday School room has tables and chairs for art, so these are stacked high around the room to allow large numbers of people to be seated about on the floor.

A wedding, and 14 birthday parties I attended are included as 'congregational settings', as the Karens conduct these in a similar manner to a church service, and private conversation and sharing is limited to mealtimes afterwards. Given my low Sgaw comprehension, I could only determine that birthday parties are conducted in a similar manner to the home church services, except prayers, songs, Bible readings and offerings are directed at the birthday girl or boy. A story may be shared about the person, and twice - due to the presence of myself, and other regulars - were interpreted into English. The party setting is more congregational or familial than 'public' or 'private' as the gathering is of families with a few non-Karen from TFC attending by invitation. During the field work I became familiar with all the members of the Karen church, and several other Tasmanian Karen who were not regular church goers. For 18 months, I attended both the 10am English service and the 11:30 Karen service at TFC, and almost every celebration event I was invited to. After this period (and to date) I attended a service twice a month, to keep up with friends and language, and allow me to check my observations against my explanations[34].

Photo board

Within three months of attending the church, I gained permission to create a set of photographs on a large unused notice board and began to take photographs during the busy

[34] I attend two weeks in four as I am also a committed member of another local church with my husband since we married in 2016. The Karen choir sang at my wedding

second-Sunday of the month (Tabernacle Sunday; see Findings), as lunch was being prepared. Taking photos was an excellent way to interact with people, although it was an overwhelmingly busy few hours as I was swamped with Karens wanting their picture taken, and later requests for copies of photos kept me regular at the local printer. I labelled the photos with Karen and Australian names accordingly, and captured a good number, but not all families. The photo board project operated as a *token* - a way to mark my position in the community as a contributing member (Goffman 1969:87). From this event, I built up and maintained a range of other tokens to express my involvement and commitment including consistent attendance at Karen events, wearing the Karen tunics I was gifted, and speaking some Sgaw (see Reflexive conclusions).

Migratograph

This early method of storytelling and recording was used with one family but abandoned as too invasive. In the days after presenting my research proposal to the Karens as a group during their service, I was at Naw's house for our weekly English lessons that had begun, and Gaw Sha offered to tell his story. The stories told to me that day by a single family were so startlingly diverse that I created two visual representations and used them at a sociology conference later that year (see Appendix F). In those early months I always came prepared with a fieldwork folder: information sheets and consent forms[35], plus writing paper and detail maps of Burma (see Appendix H, B). Given the stories likely trauma content, and knowing I was working with a low-literacy group, I had also devised a way to record these refugee journeys by reference to 'years in each location' as a coloured stacked bar graph. I surmised that if I asked about years in Burma, years in camp, and years in Tasmania these would give context quickly and participants could fill in as much or as little further detail of this that felt right to them. This acknowledges techniques developed by colonialized methodologists (often in Latin America) who use a critical method called testimonio which allows the disadvantaged to voice their story in their own way, but also to keep secrets and silences (see for example Perez Huber 2009; Haig-Brown 2003). As noted elsewhere, it was quickly apparent that using such bibliographic methods would not be appropriate to this group. Asking about years in each location risked thin data, and artificially applied a linear narrative to the story, but did give a 'soft start' to talking about journeys without directly requesting thicker description. In the family setting, each person had enough English to be able to supply

[35] This folder fell into disuse, as English language-learning materials and snacks had more traction on visits.

the years, with a few details of explanation. Gaw Sha seemed particularly keen to tell me even private details of his story since arriving in Tasmania. While these details are not included, the combined years of association with this and other families do round out the stories and insights of this study.

Language exchange

Language exchange as participation

Language exchange formed the backbone of my closer interactions with the Karens, and was the keystone to friendships, observations, and insights. While language-learning is often an unreported or taken for granted aspect of research (Gibb and Danero 2017), language exchange became a significant method and continues in the Findings. In the Findings, Scene 6 illustrates a typical language-exchange encounter where I taught English (although these occurred across several settings). In this section, however, the more incidental exchanges of English, and weekly Sgaw language learning is recounted. The research encounter is relevant to the methods, and ethics[36], so the following is in first person to give an initial sense of how communication happened given language proficiencies (my Sgaw, and the Karens' English), and how both of these developed alongside friendships (also continued in the Findings, from Scene 6).

I had just attended my first Karen service, on the 5th October 2014, when *Therah* approached me and asked if I would like to learn Karen. I accepted, genuinely eager to learn as a way to forge connections, meet this man and his family at home, gain a better sense of culture. I was uncertain, however, as I had not yet gained ethics approval, and *Therah's* softly-spoken English was difficult for me to understand at that time, and he deferred to me how to spell Thursday in his notebook. It was to be a very slow process. He began by teaching the letter names and sounds for the script, a 26-consonant alphabet plus nine vowels, and five tone modifiers. Each lesson I recorded *Therah's* voice and my repetitions so I could practice. At home, I would play the recording with my thumb near the mic, listening to *Therah* then muffling my original repetition as I repeated sounds. I can only cringe actually listening back over these recordings, and marvel at *Therah's* forbearance. *Therah* taught me phrases from a tattered Sgaw grade reader, but did not have the English to translate beyond a few isolated words. I found a few resources online, so was able to work through a set of lessons on the

[36] The Social Sciences' HREC explicitly requested that I state my competence in Sgaw.

script and reading Sgaw (Ballard n.d, *Say it in Karen* books 1-4 and dictionary of vocabulary), words and phrases in a picture dictionary (Davidson 2010) and later, grammar (Gilmore 1898). I had one-hour lessons weekly with *Therah*, and short home practice each day plus an hour on weekends doing pronunciation until my mouth hurt, reading and memorising Sgaw script until my eyes blurred. I despaired ever being able to learn useful phrases this way, and knew I would not have adequate Karen to explain abstract ideas in a few years, but wanted to keep showing up and sensed I would have enough to be polite. As it transpired, *Therah's* focus on pronunciation, and teaching me to read and write Sgaw gave me a base to expand my home study to reading, speaking and using dictionaries, and eventually invent my own phrases from words I know. My Karen friends are amused and admiring, and I seek correction which they eagerly provide. I reciprocated this help by teaching English weekly (below), and rephrasing English to 'correct' their questions before supplying answers. Karens and I tend to repeat words and phrases already in use, so I think of our conversations as Karenglish. Now, after four years, Karen conversation and preaching are still beyond me, but I have learnt vocab 'accidentally' from songs, and Bible memory verses, and use themes or vocab from these to communicate ideas when I am stuck. I have read out memory verses in Sgaw, can read enough to sing familiar songs in Sgaw, can catch themes in talk, follow simple directions or questions, and hack phrases by using shared vocab, and referring to shared knowledge. For example, my Karen dictionaries (Davidson 2010; Wade 1883) do not list the Sgaw for 'disciple', but I am able to talk about Jesus' students, then list his twelve followers to get the concept across – Karens use these workarounds also. So, learning and speaking some Sgaw was not only polite, and a way to see Karen culture and meet Karens at home regularly, it was a powerful way to communicate interest, commitment, and share a life of faith (I discuss this further alongside research beneficence, below). These examples show how Christianity operated alongside Karenglish in multiple ways to become a lingua franca. Faith opened the way for me to participate in Karen rituals such as prayer and worship, was the stage from which I was able to be a familiar face, become a language teacher, and was a shared cultural premise from which I received and gave hospitality. While the classic ethnography combines interview with observation, this study combined an extensive element of exchange and language sharing (Karen, English, and Karenglish) – not only to enhance observations, but to benefit participation, and as beneficence.

The extensive observation in this study was undertaken in a cross-language environment, and this impacted the 'data collection', but deepened the focus on communication and language

exchange rather than language per se, increased exponentially over time. For example, attending the Sgaw-speaking service allowed observation of the Christian Karens as a community, but the formalities of conducting a church service, and my limited Sgaw, limited my understanding of what was said, and limited opportunities for one-on one conversation. However, even knowing a few words early on allowed me to identify who was *Therah* or *Therah Mu* and pick up on Karen ways such as familial naming, and be polite (or amusing, although that was also welcomed). Most of the meanings I gathered verbally were in face to face conversations with local Karens and visiting Karen pastors whose English was advanced. At concerts, however, often the laughter and socialising allowed me to sit by a teenager who might comment to me in English, or occasionally interpret. After four years I am able to pick out a few themes in preaching or prayers in Sgaw for myself, but still do not get a sense of the overall meaning. So, while explicit community priorities were obscure, observation of the social action helped fill these gaps (Fine 2003: 6).

Language exchange as beneficence

In living in another language, I was experiencing what many Karens would in an English-speaking service, and not only empathise, but adjust my English accordingly. These limitations led me to communicate better with local Karens: I sought them out before and after church, joined their meetings, visited them and spent time especially sitting for tea, and spoke face to face about everyday life, and the research. On numerous occasions - perhaps some administrative matter arose – I was sought out by a leader or other Karen to explain and was able to do so in one-on-one discussion (see below section on research beneficence). I developed a way of speaking that was simple, unhurried, used 'props' such as gesture, context, and repeated details while (hopefully) not appearing to patronise (see Eldridge 2008: 117). I came to refer to this as speaking 'Karenglish'[37] as this is a simplified form of English that can build on the words this group of people already use (and, occasionally, the grammatical idiosyncrasies). For example, in assisting with a form asking for work experience, I could clarify the question was asking about training, studies and schools (sometimes using Sgaw for these words). I would not use words like formal education or completion but familiar words and phrases like did you go to primary school? High school?

[37] Karenglish is not a combination of languages but an 'Engerish' or Spanglish (Asian or Singaporean-style English), often humorous and requiring some interpretive licence. For example, Malay friends profess to speak Manglish; 'can you send me back' (can you take me home) while Karenglish has different peculiarities, for example 'sorry you call mess (sic) me' (sorry I missed your call) and 'do you have the time' (are you available).

Bible School? (pause for any answer), and did you finish? This would furnish the person with a range of familiar words to repeat or refute (not Bible School, Bible training), something I appreciated myself with questions in Sgaw. Often, to avoid patronising, there was a need to leave out further explanation of concepts unless asked or inquire do you know this word? and allow time for dictionaries to be consulted. Thus, the stock of shared language grew not only in the sense that I learnt, heard and spoke more Sgaw and they English, but in that communication improved. This stock of language and relations became a resource for getting other things done alongside Karens (see Discussion – *Language exchange and bridging capitals*).

La pa ti dor deh (tea and talking)

Much of the success of interacting with Tasmanian Karens came from my habit of bringing a small something to eat when visiting someone at home, and their passionate hospitality. In Karen villages it is common practice to visit for an evening meal to discuss or arrange an upcoming event such as a marriage or some co-operative agricultural task (Rajah 2008). When meeting strangers, a session of snacks and casual conversation around family and home life ensues first, and only after this, when relationships have developed, will the talk move on to matters of business (see Rogers 2004: 231). I also found that my visits to Karen homes were greatly eased by this drinking of tea and sharing of snack food. I increasingly accepted offers to come inside if I turned up uninvited (for example returning something) but would usually arrange a visit and then follow the householders lead as to the hospitality they would offer. Almost without exception I was given an unrivalled treat - sweetened powdered coffee - on my first few weeks of visits. I drank it with thanks but as I got to know people I explained I do not like milk and they gave me another favourite *la pa ti* (literally 'green-leaf water'). From this my very colloquial Karenglish *la pa ti dor deh* is derived, where more accurately it could be *bwah oh la pa ti dor deh tha kot (we drink tea and talk together)*.

Violet Cho (2011) is a Karen woman who conducted a study about Burmese diaspora identities in Auckland, New Zealand and used an 'indigenous Karen research methodology' called '*tapoetethakot'*. Cho (2011: 196-8) explains there is no English equivalent for this Sgaw Karen word such as 'chatting' as *tapoetethakot* also implies close kinship, as in Karen culture others are regarded as relatives - an older man is *Par Di* (uncle), a young girl *Paw Mu* or *Day Mu* (little sister). Cho (2011: 197-8) lists seven principles of the methodology, which are oriented to herself as a Karen woman, and participants with whom she shares a

background from Burma, and friendships developed in Auckland. Cho's principles involve treating participants with respect and as relatives, informal meetings rather than interviews which entail reciprocal sharing of self and stories and food, being open about the research, being a supportive and 'useful part of the community', recognising experiential knowledge and oral tradition, and recruitment through informal networks (2011: 197-8). Within this study, my researcher position is not as a linguistic and cultural insider of a similar background, so this changes what could be 'shared' in all senses of that term. Perhaps in part due to this distance, but also due to the different religions, region, and recent-arrival of Cho's group, the findings of our two studies could hardly be more different (see Discussion). Further, while I asked Therah about this term, he was unable to recognise it, perhaps because English transliteration and Sgaw pronunciation will vary. For instance, Sgaw Karen has a t/d sound so the term could be spelled *da poe deh [tha kot]* the people talk [as friends/informally/together][38]). In any case, while *tapoetethakot* was perhaps not as applicable to me as an outsider, tea drinking represented time together, and is a perennial comfort in Tasmania's cool climate.

Sgaw Karen lessons with Therah were quite a focused time, with less family around so we would often just share a thermos of tea. But on arrival to English lessons at Naw's large household I was given all manner of cups with tea or coffee or boiled water, and I brought or was offered snacks. Increasingly, after giving a lesson, I was also pressed to 'eat rice' – join them for a dinner of rice accompanied by gathered wild greens, a bowl of broth-like soup, curry and chili paste. Before my marriage these friends complained I was thin, pressed food on me and watched contentedly as I crunched through fried rolls or large pieces of homemade pork crackling. Savoury snacks and fruit are favourites, so I focused my habitual gifts on fresh-picked blackberries or plums, rhubarb stalks, boxes of popcorn and bags of apples. Karens and I would sit companionably, demolishing cracker mixes, or sharing the one spoon from a bowl of traditional fermented tea-leaf salad. Too often the conversation would rage on without my understanding, women laughing and gesturing or talking with quiet intensity about some matter. But food and tea became a signal and a vehicle for time in conversation and keeping company. *La pa ti dor deh* was not unique to lessons. I sat with a friend who lost

[38] The *poe deh* (__ talk) may be what some dictionaries list as *hpoh* (sounds like 'paw') for people/group member but Karens also say *bwah deh* (we talk) so this is uncertain. In Sgaw the word 'friend' and 'together' are homonyms, both *tha kot* (sounds like tha goh!). The Sgaw script for *tapoetethakot* is needed to clarify.

a pregnancy and had only a few words of comfort, but we nibbled croissants together. I attended a funeral for a Karen who suicided - I knew her son, so came along when all the Christian Karens gathered to host the service for the family. The son lay prone on the floor, muffled in blankets, immobile with sickness and shock. Two local workers arrived after the prayers and songs were over and were at a loss how to proceed. But beside the man a circle of eaters formed as the Karens split open sunflower seeds from a bag and piled up the casings. This ignoble ritual seemed to affirm a bond, the sitters biting the seeds and spitting out bits and chatting as an unspoken sign of life, a token of togetherness, solidarity and accord (Goffman 1969).

Feedback sessions (non-Karen)

In addition to the years of participant observation, I held a number of informal feedback sessions with non-Karen informants (Picken 2013: 342), to round out the history and story of Karen resettlement from their perspective. I also gave one formal feedback session in March 2018 to a small group of church leaders and key involved people (transversals, see below). In order to obtain ethics approval for the range of sessions I was required to draw up an interview schedule, however the sessions were open-ended and had often begun, and would continue over coffees after church when people engaged with me about 'the research'. The history of Karen arrival, some family problems and a few 'discomforts' (see Noble 2005) were points of focus for the informal chats, and some were aspects I had not heard from Karens or would not hear until later. The talks with non-Karen felt a lot like gossip but did contain important information about who was new, what they needed and were like culturally (see Gluckman 1963, cited in Wise 2009: 30). Although, a lot of the latter kinds of detail was increasingly asked of me, even from those very closely engaged with Karens. As Fine explains, to do ethnography is to trade in gossip (2004: xiii). Wise points out that information sharing developed between 'transversals' (people engaged with 'other' cultural groups) can act as an informal 'knowledge network' (2009: 24, 30). The central informants in the informal space were Mr and Mrs H. I chose formal follow-up discussions with Mr and Mrs H, Mrs E and Mrs I for two reasons. Most importantly, they were key transversals as they had engaged closely with each family since the arrival of the first few Karen and were still closely engaged during the study. Wise (2010) calls these sorts of people transversal enablers (see section in Chapter 6 – *Ethics of care, transversal work and practices*). Secondly, I felt fewer but more personal connections with the characters in the spaces would allow a greater level of detail (see Wise in Neal 2015: 993:4; Musante 2014). So, sessions were about me

checking my insights, and these transversals expressed an eagerness to share knowledge, and hear my perspective as a different observer who was also 'immersed' (Mr H). I detail these transversals' involvement with the Tasmanian Karen in the Findings (Part 1) and Discussion (see Chapter 6 – *Ethics of care, transversal work and practices*). As for the single formal feedback session to non-Karen (March 2018), I was given 15 minutes to present, and 10 minutes for questions at the start of a regularly scheduled leaders meeting. There were nine attendees, which included all the leadership team, elders and key roles such as secretary and treasurer, plus Mr and Mrs H, Mrs E and Mrs I were additional invited guests who left with me after my segment.

Formal general report to TBC

At the formal feedback session to TFC, I began by requesting an opening prayer for the sharing session. I focused on giving practical details about Karen resettlement and interactions in the space (see Appendix G). I emphasised how this group of resettlers are active home-makers and busy building and supporting their community. I gave brief statistics about the success Australia has seen as a settler nation but outlined the difference between urban and rural Karen settlements (see Background). I dichotomised the social and civic exclusions that refugees face in Australia due language, loss of prior status, roles, and skills-recognition with the inclusions they experience in church. I gave the example that Naw, handpicked to fill Australian humanitarian visa quotas needs adequate English to pass the citizenship test required to obtain a passport and travel home to family. So, I exhorted the group that the small, symbolic and ritual elements of 'doing church' are meaningful, and allow participation despite language and cultural barriers: rituals we may take for granted are powerful. I pointed out that the offerings, prayers, Bible readings, communion were all familiar, perhaps the only familiar thing for new arrivals. I emphasised that although the first families arrived ten years ago, the arrivals are contiguous - sixteen people (four single women with four children each) had just arrived in the last months. I explained how a few Karen leaders are doing a lot, so care must be taken to consider initiatives in light of community capacity (Wilding and Nunn 2016). The burden on those with English and other skills, for instance, could fall on youth still completing their own education. In addition, in these communities everyone needs a Learners Permit, not just youth in two-parent-two-car households. So, leaders and others with licences assist many including non-breadwinner households with access to cars, driving lessons and drivers – plus the English to allow independence. I gave practical actions around not just assisting Karens, but entering into

exchanges as these give people dignity, and suit these Karens who value helping themselves (cf Wilding and Nunn 2016). I exhorted the group to consider the skills these Karens do have and used the analogy of 'teaching to fish rather than giving a fish' to suggest we recognise their 'fishing'; that is, their social and economic activity. I asked the group to consider how Karen activities can overlap with ours, such as how those already doing Sunday School or helping in the crèche can be encouraged to use their skills towards childcare or teaching careers. I returned to points about problems in urban areas with fast culture loss and generational conflict to say that Karens need to be encouraged and supported to keep their language and culture as these are strong, stable, familiar ways and yet *do* transform through assimilation (see Chapter 2). I emphasised that resettlement is very slow and in-process - so there will be discomforts, but that we should celebrate what this church offers as a space and what as a social group we can do together with Karens.

In the question time, I answered queries about working with low-English literacy teens (see resources provided Appendix G), and about Karen families and church funds dispersal. It was news to the group that Karen pastors received no stipend. One Pastor is on a Government payment plus cash work and another works fulltime: both in addition to their roles and families, plus driver-training and other duties. I outlined a couple of issues to do with parenting in Australia, as Karens were admonished against corporal punishment, but not given alternatives. I pointed out the assumed new freedom between men and women's associations, and the likelihood that young men could secure transport faster than mothers, has resulted in teen pregnancies. Despite our older congregation (few young families) I suggested that inviting Karens to our homes is a good way to exemplify non-physical discipline, talk about and show parenting. Because Karens had asked my advice on discipline I suggested a popular parenting course (Alpha) with one-on-one or family-based delivery. I stressed that Karens do not know our lives: they have not been invited into our homes. For example, Karens who have been here six years are still asking newcomer questions like 'how often do you shower?'. I reiterated that this group are still in 'party mode' as access to food, freedom and family is a dream come true, so Karens still want to do a lot together, socially (Wilding and Nun 2016). I noted again settling takes time, there will be mistakes, it will be uncomfortable without English, but to persist with small politeness. Karens hate to impose[39],

39 For example, Karen have apologised for not understanding the host culture, but also 'feel sorry' for the party-host households and neighbours due to the disruption and dense car parking.

and so - just as a guest would wait for the hosts' lead before helping themselves - *we* need to keep making overtures to the Karens. We can include Karens, recognise their talents, ask them to use their skills or take a role; and if we buy vegetables, child care and gardening from Karens it can be with a view to formal employment. I suggested we could notice those with skills and encourage them towards employment and consider partnering with them through training or tutoring.

Friendship as method

> People have to feel secure before they can start talking to one another
>
> – Daw Aung San Suu Kyi[40]

Friendship as method (Tillmann-Healy 2003) is 'conceptually close to in-depth interview' and shares qualities with this method – reciprocity, co-construction and emphases on interpretation (Hesse-Biber 2006: xxv- xxvi). Friendship methods take intersubjective elements beyond a single data collection phase, however, by moving to deepen the interpersonal interactions into the reciprocal relationships common to natural friendship (Hesse-Biber 2006: xxvi). Friendship can be seen as a method very relevant to examining lives as lived (see Block, Warr, Gibbs and Riggs 2013). Marlowe (2013) emphasises that interpersonal relationships, reciprocity, and an appropriately slow pace are key for research with refugee communities. The approach is time consuming, but this matches the pace of refugee resettlement and integration work (Marlowe 2017). The pace of complex lived reality, such as the resettlement of dispersed peoples, thus requires the years typical of ethnography (Tillmann-Healy 2003; Musante 2014). Social bonds are formed through interaction and reciprocity, and reciprocity and co-operative work is a feature of Karen village life (Rajah 2008), and of migrant home-building. These methods are guided by the 'ethic of friendship' that is based in extensive giving and genuine investments in people, which represents a challenge to traditional ethics within research practice (Hesse-Biber 2006: xxvi). These methods seek to understand, not control, and are alert to what will benefit the other - like a good friendship.

40 Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the situation in Burma, at a joint press conference at her residence in Rangoon, November 14, 2014. Available at: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/14/remarks-president-obama-and-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-burma-joint-press-conf. (Accessed 7 January 2018).

Features of friendship methods

Tillmann-Healy (2001) coined the term friendship as method, which is directed by the methodological foundations of friendship. This mode of research is defined by the pacing, practices, contexts and ethics of friendship. Additionally, the research endeavour shares key features with friendship, such as building rapport - 'the entrée' - the negotiation and fluidity of roles (student, teacher, advocate, confidant), and concerns about reciprocity or mutual beneficence. Tillmann-Healy's (2003) description of her PhD research was fieldwork exemplified by friendship as a core feature[41]. Friendships are characterised by conversation, mutual care and support, and shared fun and activities (Tillmann-Healy 2003). Tillman-Healy uses Bauber's terminology to note that research relationships can move from instrumental to personal to intimate (1988, cited in Tillmann-Healy 2001: 732).

Friendships in research carry ethical implications as they are instrumental relations, yet friendship affords iterative participant checks – not only to enhance ethics, but as an analytic tool: talk and ongoing association can confirm and tweak findings. My friendship with local Karens was instrumental to the research but, guided by the 'ethic of friendship', was also instrumental to their lives and resettlement too (Hesse-Biber 2006). The reliance on face to face communication is at the heart of the success of this method. These approaches take time and this reflects the 'slowly slowly' nature of the work that processes of integration, resettlement and recovery can represent to refugees (Marlowe 2013). As this method involved sustained engagement and personal connection, reflexivity is a central feature – there can be no friendship without the researcher befriending participants. Researchers have 'multiple selves' (Reinharz 1997), none of which can be objective, but must be acknowledged as carrying subjectivities. Yet these selves can be 'mobilised as a way of making connections' with those whose lives and culture differ (Babb 2006: 50).

Researcher 'selves'

My 'selves' and position as a learner and speaker of Sgaw Karen, and my Christianity did not afford me insider status with Karens, but did form a 'hermeneutic bridge' (Babb 2006). Babb (2006) explains that a hermeneutic bridge is a meaningful set of common understandings

[41] Tillmann-Healy's study evolved from a class project to become a narrative ethnography, then a PhD and book (*Between gay and straight: friendship across sexual orientation,* 2001) about her and her husbands' real and research relationship with gay friends (cited in Tillmann-Healy 2003).

through which disparate people can connect[42]. As noted above, Christianity operated in multiple ways to become this bridge, and a lingua franca. Hospitality, for example, is an ethic that permeates Christian culture and is a feature of faith-based organisations' support of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia (Wilson 2011).[43] Christianity, and the attendant dispositions, was a shared cultural premise from which I received and gave hospitality and become a language teacher. My faith opened the way for me to participate in Karen rituals such as prayer, Bible reading and worship, so allowed me to become an 'expected participant' - the familiar face ethnographers strive for (Fine 2003). Tillmann-Healy explains that layered connections also afford a view of 'the many faces of oppression' (Young 2000, cited in Tillmann-Healy 2003: 737). As the focus of this research was on observing interactions, capitals and lived experience rather than presuming problems, cultural domination and identities, the findings describe the different 'faces' of resettled life: community priorities and rituals, mutual expectations and care, daily difficulties, family life and forms and challenges.

An increasingly central feature of my researcher 'self' was as a friend. Just as belonging and human interaction (including ethnic 'integration') are two-way social processes (Strang and Ager 2010), friendships are mutual and develop over time via co-contributions toward shared understandings (Tillmann-Healy 2003). Karens were instrumental in developing these friendships; they would not have developed without their proactive overtures, their consistent welcome and invitation into their lives that made relations and research possible. Manjikian (2010) found that even while 'in-between' and socially invisible or marginalised - such as waiting for permanent residency - refugees can lead meaningful lives and be proactive about self-determination, social engagement and contribution. Tillmann-Healy (2003) reported that her participants showed pride in the researcher's involvement in their lives, and the

[42] This can be compared with Berger (2000), an ambivalent Jew studying Messianic Jews (cited in Tillmann-Healy 2003); and with the apparently non-religious working with religious (non-Catholic studying Catholic, see Knibbe 2007), and Burrell (2006), not stated but working with Irish Catholic, Polish or Greek-Cypriot Orthodox in Britain.

[43] For instance, Australian FBOs' campaigns for compassion and service provision has challenged public discourses around asylum seekers by ameliorating or shifting 'harsh' immigration policy, and expanding community-based detention (Wilson 2011). But while the 'history, motivations, nature and implications of faith-based humanitarian responses to forced migration' remain understudied, providing sanctuary is a Judaeo-Christian tradition that has shifted from sacred to state-based spaces (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011).

contribution they are able to make to her life. This pride is evident in the genuine and overt affection I receive from certain Karens on sight, and especially after periods away. Karens ask after me, scold me for staying away, ask me to pray or eat with them, and constantly note to each other and newcomers that I 'speak Sgaw'. While this latter description is a stretch, speaking a minority language, and insider status can enhance rigor and cultural sensitivity (Irvine et al 2017). These elements of the research and engagement made for elements of a 'radical reciprocity' (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 735). My speaking Sgaw, particularly, was a powerful token of my investment in Karens (Goffman 1969). But combined with sustained engagement, casual and formal language exchanges, and firm friendships this was a message of solidarity that prompted Therah Mu to describe my presence as 'being sent by God to us' (November 2015).

Ethics and this friendship ethnography

Now a person well-known to the Karen community, I initially worked with a community leader to create and present a bilingual research invitation to each family in December of 2014. I spoke freely to these Karens about moving to Hobart explicitly for my studies, and anyone I knew soon discovered I was interested in the Karen people. I was committed to learning language, and increasingly spoke in Sgaw. This researcher position was unusual in that it did not encompass the role of interviewer but 'helper/joiner'; so, I was not an unknown (cf Bryman 2012) but it is unclear if I was, to them, 'researcher' as Westerners understand the term. At the same time, my participatory role took me into family homes at moments of crisis, I was asked for help with forms where I discovered household income, and I heard or saw family or personal secrets that I needed to keep. As there was a concurrent concern not to invade privacy, the less invasive technique of observation was used, and the ethics work was 'embedded' into each inquiry and situation and personified in my reflections, and the ethic of friendship (Fletcher 1966; Riessman 2008; Tillmann-Healy 2003). Ethics and consent were an ongoing, situational negotiation; an interpretive 'work'. This work was conducted in a liminal space between subtleties of yes and no, so how this has played out in this and other fieldwork is included here.

Research with refugees and those who say 'no'

Studies have reported on research where a 'no' in some form was recorded, or ethnographic findings were incommensurate with what the researched understood of their lives, indeed, of the research (see Tillmann-Healy 2003). This is especially so with 'reticent subcultural

groups' (Musante 2014; see Picken 2013), who may be cautious about exchanges in English (Wise 2010), including Australian Karen who are seen as reluctant and shy (see Bird 2013; Couch et al 2010). A study in Logan, Queensland – where Karen are one of the prominent groups[44], found CALD groups were reluctant to access and use mainstream health services as they were unfamiliar, difficult to access due to problems related to early-arrival information overload, language difficulties and lack of interpreters, and do not incorporate or respect traditional medicine and practices (Henderson and Kendall 2011). The CALD communities in this study were dissatisfied that community outsiders were used as interpreters (the Government-sponsored TIS was used), and wary of those who speak for them (Henderson and Kendell 2011). Couch, Adonis and MacLaren (2010) used a large and well-established group of volunteers to conduct research among Karens in Bendigo, but found they were reticent to speak about their lives, fearful of identification to the government(s), unwilling to make statements about the Australian government and, especially, to be recorded. They also reported Bendigo Karens were reluctant to volunteer friends' names to the research, for similar reasons (Couch et al 2010). In her PhD research with Brisbane-based Karens, Bird reported that Karen seemed uncomfortable, especially with tape recorders (Bird 2013: 126). These resettlers were reluctant to speak, and uncomfortable with formal requests to interview (Bird 2013, 2016). The deep divisions between Karens and officials in Burma, and the power officials wield over Karen lives add extensive history to this picture of distrust (see Rajah 2008; Fozdar and Hartly 2013; ABC 2013). In her Masters research, Eldridge had consent to use real Hmong names but decided not to, and to aggregate contributions, recording just one participant's refusal to consent 'as I had not [yet] earned his trust' (2008: 12).

Bryman (2012) notes that the British Sociological Association (BSA) statement of ethical conduct 'essentially leaves the door ajar for covert observation [in using] the phrase 'as far as possible' regarding informed consent (Bryman 2012: 139) - the statement goes on to say 'Researchers may also face problems when access to spheres of social life is closed to social scientists due to powerful or secretive interests'. Bryman (2012) reminds researchers, however, that work should not be conducted in non-public spaces without participants knowledge, or should only be conducted where it is impossible to use other methods. Covert

[44] Henderson and Kendell (2011) used English to conduct interpreted focus groups with Sudanese, Afghani, Pacific Islander and 'Burmese', however ethnic groups other than Burmese – Hmong and Karen - live in Logan; the city has a Burmese Myanmar Friendship Association of Queensland, though (Logan City Council, 2016).

research is characterised by observation or participation where the identity of the researcher is unknown (Bryman 2012: 138)[45]. There is a distinction to be drawn, then between covert research 'to avoid certain problems' and 'informed' consent. Fletcher refers to 'situation ethics' (1966: 31, cited in Bryman 2012: 133) and Riessman notes that ethics should be 'embedded' in any inquiry (2008: 200). These latter ethical approaches capture something of the way this research was conducted, and Tillmann-Healy refers to these as 'the ethic of friendship' (2003: 730). Tillmann-Healy notes that for some researchers, such as Berger (2000), who considered interviewing Jewish families about their reactions to a Christian convert among relatives, the ethic of friendship trumped ethnographic curiosity (2003: 741). Conversely, the friend/researcher duality also makes murky what to report, especially if disturbing or discrediting actions or attitudes are uncovered (Tillmann-Healy 2003).

As the researcher role was not 'unknown', this research was not covert (see Bryman 2012), but there remains a concern these Karen, like many research participants – especially those with less formal education, English or experience with interviews (leaving aside interrogation) - were not able to be *fully* informed (see Mulhall 2003)[46]. Bryman (2012) explains that as qualitative research is fluid and unpredictable the actual research conducted is often incommensurate with the forms, either not capturing or misstating what will be done - for example it is common for interviews to exceed the time stated on a form. Plus, people understand or interpret research differently (Punch 1994: 91 cited in Bryman 2012: 140). Different understandings of the research and my role were evident in this project. English speakers would constantly engage with me around the research, including wanting to get together not only to be interviewed and share ideas, but also hear my insights. Early in the research I was warned by church members about 'helping', as Karen people would soon 'use me up', eager for assistance with English and daily needs. These Karens were eager and did ask 'are you available' for lessons – but I was, and they would say 'we worry about you' if our sessions were extended by other requests – they were concerned not to overload me as 'helper'.

[45] Covert studies have been conducted within the last decade (see Brotsky and Giles 2007; Pearson 2009, cited in Bryman 2012: 139). For example, Brotsky and Giles conducted covert participatory observation online 'inside the pro-ana community', to examine stigmatised pro-anorexia websites (2007, cited in Bryman 2012: 139).

[46] For an excellent review of methodological issues for observation in the nursing field see Mulhall (2003).

Research ethics vs the ethics of friendship

Karens so constantly drew me into their home lives that I heard their stories, which included hearing they were not yet ready to share them. So, while an arduous formal ethics application (three separate submissions and one amendment to allow a verbal consent process) 'approved' what I proposed (see Appendix H), this did not fit what these Karen actually shared over the ensuring four years. Of the two families I befriended most closely one told me his story, and another checked and approved the consent forms for me – this person said they were fine, but never signed the paper copies because he did not want to tell his story yet. Ethics state informed consent must 'as far as possible' inform participants and insure consent, yet even English-speaking participants may not be informed about the nature of a PhD. For instance, Fine's ethnographic work with both poor and elite artists said some may not have 'fully comprehended [my explanations] but were aware how I might use them for my ends' (2004:11). So, as I 'informed' from a different cultural perspective and language, (despite information sheets in Sgaw), informing remains problematic. I became more confident about a lack of harm, a lack of overt deception, and of the beneficence of the research (reflection on beneficence continues below) as I continued to befriend Karens and saw their positive reception of my friendship. On more than one occasion young girls observed about me that 'you love the Karen' while I was visiting a home or wearing Karen clothing. Several Karens who I came to know very well through language exchange were especially vocal and would greet me with gusto and kisses.

Ethics concerns arising from the formal requirements loomed like a spectre in this research and acted as a constant 'hand break' on inquiry (see and cf Bryman 2012). At times, this took a toll on my emotional health (see reflexive conclusion). So, I limited my observations to public spaces, and participatory observation in homes was mostly in the form of language lessons as they were offered (by *Therah* to learn Sgaw), or as requested (to teach English to *Naw*) or as I was invited (to parties, weddings, small prayer gatherings and memorial services). During field work, and to date, I called households an afternoon ahead to confirm they were available for a visit – in fact this operated to deepen friendships and allowed householders and me to practice language on the phone and say what we were busy with. Yet belabouring consent such as asking if I could take a photograph or waiting for invitations before attending events, only caused consternation for Karens who saw me as an expected participant (Fine 2003), and a friend. Tillmann-Healy (2003) discusses research which shows the bonds of friendship in Western culture are affiliative and affective, which consigns them

more fragility than the religious, familial or legal dimensions of family and marriage. But friendships are thus voluntary rather than obligatory, and this is central to the following consideration of research ethics.

The ethic of friendship: reflexivity and research beneficence

From the outset I recognised that my relationships with Karen and others at TFC were 'instrumental', not neutral. But, like many researchers, I came to acknowledge that these relationships could also share features of friendship (Tillmann-Healy 2003). Research relationships evolve (Beech et al 2009 cited in Engelsman et al 2017: 5), so ethics must also be a continuous process of 'consent'. Reflexivity is key to this process (Engelsman et al. 2017). Bourdieu explains the ethical dilemma of research relations, saying

> How can we not feel anxious about making private words public, revealing confidential statements made in the context of a relationship based on trust that can only be established between two individuals? True, everyone we talked to agreed to let us use their statements as we saw fit. But no contract carries as many unspoken conditions as one based on trust (Bourdieu 1999: 1 cited in Engelsman et al. 2017: 5).

The concern Engelsman and colleagues (2017) have is around 'egocentric questioning', even symbolic violence perpetuated by the powerful direction of conversation – that only particularises broader concerns about power differentials. Margery Wolf, a feminist ethnographer, argues pointedly that it is 'a curious postmodernist politics that condemns us for our individual colonialist attitudes but remains aloof from the often bloody results of oppressive governments' (1992: 6). Tillmann-Healy explains how friendship as method can be characterised by 'radical reciprocity' (2003: 735). Friendships across difference can be rare, she explains, but these bonds can become political as the member of the dominant group becomes an ally, or advocates for rights, justice and personal growth as a challenge to the macro-level status of their friend (2003; see also Rawlins 1992, cited in Tillmann-Healy 2003: 731). Bourdieu (1999, cited in Engelsman et al 2017: 5) adds that 'social proximity and familiarity are two of the conditions which may enable nonviolent communication'. As friendships are predicated on equality, friendship methods 'resist[s] hierarchical separation between researcher and participants' (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 733). This is not that researchers should deny our relative power, our privilege, education and dominance but that we form bonds despite these and write and act as a practice of engaged citizenship (Tillmann-Healy 2003: 736). These forms of research are a radical departure from definitions in Section 2 of

the National Statement of Ethical Conduct (NHMRC 2007:30-37), which situates beneficence within the assessment, identification, management and justification of *risk* and specified *harms*. The Section includes a single sentence exemplifying broad benefits; to knowledge, social welfare and wellbeing, and skills gain for researchers and institutions (NHMRC 2007: 37).

Given the unequal relations of an outsider researcher, and linguistic and symbolic capital differences - even to accent differences – I was a stranger doing a study at first. But the sustained nature of the research meant that relationships developed, and I wanted to connect with peoples' lives and needs rather than just hear their stories once. The relations that developed were ones within which people were able to ask for privacy by simply showing the past was to be forgotten. This familiarity was so key to 'successfully' engaging with people such that while I did use questions, and proposed statements to open discussion, I relied far more on simply hearing from them unprompted about their lives. The interactional context led the way. This would not have occurred outside the context of close relationships. I further 'decolonised' with language and food exchanges that invest in, and acted in ways that 'valued' elements of culture and language. While teaching English was a deeply practical benefit, learning Karen was practical and reciprocal - perhaps radically so. Throughout all of these actions and deliberate inactions, there was an undercurrent of ethical considerations, mutuality, and evidence that direct questioning was undesirable or incomprehensible to these Karens. Yet these Karens seemed inordinately proud of my friendship and celebrated my presence (see Tillmann-Healy 2003).

These Karens asked me to be an ally in several ways. I was asked to accompany them on trips to Burma (including illegal border crossings) and the camps, often to see beloved relatives, who they had spoken to about me and vice versa. I was introduced to pastors and leaders from interstate and overseas, including a professor who had established a University in a rebel-held area. I was asked to consider tele-teaching for the students there and formally invited to their graduation ceremony. I felt these requests for me to join them in secret locations and activities were beyond my (self-assessed) role, my courage, and capacity financially. But I also felt certain Karens would ultimately be the ones ensuring my passage in order to share me with their family, and perhaps benefit from my English in the camps or schools, and certainly at airports en route. Language exchange was a source of solidarity and practical help. There were other requests of me aside from language lessons that required

occasional but considerable but local work that I did undertake (examples in Methods – *Language exchange*). Most notably, *Therah* requested my help to read through extensive (academic reading-level) documentation for an ordination application. These sessions were clustered weeknights stretched over two of the last several months of my thesis writing but cemented a trust between us, and did lead to other 'translation' partnerships. This work was significant, but simply a natural extension of language exchange, and the 'translation' work that I had been doing. For example, after an announcement in English, or when an administrative requirement arose I was often approached by implicated Karens or leaders to re-explain the situation in practical terms or sit beside them for form-filling. The feedback session to the church members was also a forum which continued a casual informant role that had developed around my knowledge of Karens and their lives. This engagement and ally behaviour did not erase my privilege nor raise theirs appreciably but perhaps approaches the reciprocity of the radical kind called for by post-colonial methodologists.

Analysis

> Ethnography is ultimately about transformation. We take idiosyncratic behaviours, events with numerous causes, which may—God forbid!—be random (or at least inexplicable to us mortals), and we package them... We transform them into meaningful patterns, and in so doing, we exclude other patterns, meanings, or causes. Transformation is about hiding, about magic, about change… ethnographers cannot help but lie, but in lying, we reveal truths (Fine 1994).

This section introduces some of the features of the analysis process used in this project. The analysis was a reflective process mostly facilitated by writing, while sustained (iterative) observation operated as a way to make sense of what was happening. I did not have long interview transcripts to read and analyse so my iterative work was to remain in relationships, revisit social settings and connect closely with people in order to understand the events and action (see Cho 2011: 197-8). The analysis process was a series of intersecting layers, such that data collection spanned the entire four years, and contiguous moments of reflection and writing built on what I observed, but what I observed was built back into the writing. This was a messy process involving a huge volume of writing and thinking - over one hundred thousand words towards the end of three years. Concepts from the body of theory I was reading, however, served as experimental 'buckets' that different aspects of observations could be placed in. Wise notes that research may begin with conceptual frames and

'sensitising concepts' that make the data more manageable (Neal 2015). Indeed, I began to collect a toolbox of useful concepts like everyday multiculturalism, transversals, capitals, conviviality, stage, and gesture. I added to these by developing terms I needed like friendship ethnography, ethnographic scenes, and *la pa ti dor deh.* I needed words to describe people that did justice to their diversity and agency, like resettler and regular/member, however imperfect. I developed hybrid terms like convivial arena and transversal work, and played with the 'fit' of terms to describe bonding and bridging capital, such as alternative capitals, ritual capitals/ritual as a resource, and pragmatic culture-hosts. In short, while the data collection was light on verbal and written words, the analysis was focused entirely on generating words: descriptive, analytical and conceptual language (see Agar 1980; Methodology – *Developing theory in ethnography*).

Data collection and reflection

Becker (1958:652-53) states that 'observational research produces an immense amount of detailed description' and warns that analysis of this rich data ideally occurs concurrently with collection. Agar's (1980) first level of analysis in ethnography is about the formal processes undertaken to explain what you observe. So, when theorising on this first level, my task was to observe and ask about a way of life while simultaneously creating my own explanation for it with constant comparison between the two (Agar 1980: 188-90). In reality, what occurred was that I made notes after each observation (or recorded voice memos), and as I wrote them, and returned to them over and over, I wrote 'reflexive notes' on the field notes such that they constantly grew in complexity. I experimented by putting the data into NVIVO™ (qualitative data analysis software) and coding for themes, and I used Excel to place different notes under themes I had developed. But the data was too discursive; I was dealing with stream-of conscious diary-like journal entries and field notes only sorted by date and marked by location so pulling out 'themes' disconnected the data from the temporal and spatial 'location', and dismembered ideas that only made sense in a narrative flow. Often this work disintegrated into further description using different words (summary, and adding layers of reflection), and creating networks of links between ideas and theory (analytical induction). Some of this was useful to 'think with', and think through, but once Excel and NVIVO files became difficult to systematise and too large, I abandoned them. Another method I used to systematise the data was an extensive series of thesis plans, and detailed contents pages, where I would capture what was going on, and play with the order of ideas. Wise affirms that both analysis and methodology develop over time as things 'float up' in the data (Neal 2015).

So, in inductive research, categories may take shape that can then be explored more deeply (see Neal 2015). As part of my analysis I also wrote a new abstract for the thesis every few months over the entire four years, to capture the spirit of the work in a single manageable but changeable piece. The most time consuming, iterative but successful aspect of the analytical process was the constancy of participation over four years.

Writing up this ethnography constituted a major work of analysis. I had insights as I wrote field notes - including voice memos - had conversations with supervisors, wrote journal notes, plus read and wrote about theory for thesis chapter writing. But for qualitative research, as Gabriel (2013) notes, analysis is in the 'writing through, writing up'; writing is a discovery strategy. As a researcher, the process of writing out scenes was a helpful first reflex, for instance, not only to capture visual data, but to assess 'what was happening' and somewhat compare with other work for 'first order constructs' as sense-making work (Schutz 1996, cited in Magolda 2000). In short, writing scenes helped me to remember and recall the observation, and separate it from analytical annotations. In addition, participant observation is interpretive work (Musante 2014). Later reflexive writing, and 'retrospective sense-making' occurred in iterative stages - akin to Schutz (1996) 'second order' or post-analysis induction (cited in Magolda 2000; see Gabriel 2013; Magolda 2000). At the later stages theoretical ties and comparison to past empirical work became more of a focus, but I cycled back to findings (and methodological findings) as the ideas solidified into concepts. It is in the chapters of this thesis and attempts to present ideas logically that this theoretical work and reflexive elements found expression. The structure of the thesis was hard-won, and while I could see how the findings folded though methods, methodology and theory, I was unable to imagine how to depart from a traditional thesis structure. I did not grasp the logic nor flow of either the substantive and conceptual argument until the final eight months of writing (not including the four months of honing the argument which followed the first full draft). Becker (1958) warns that the ongoing work of analysis is often not possible to complete until after field work ceases, but I found that new insights continued apace as I continued to 'immerse in the data' – not by reading transcripts or only revisiting my notes after 'leaving the field', but by continuing to revisit the church and the people, to date.

Successful analysis was afforded by the sustained nature of the project. For example, one insight took a full four years to understand. One of the earliest insights I had into the church interaction with Karens was a story about a series of tricky meetings early-on, where church

members used the TIS to communicate with Karens (almost certainly using a Burmese interpreter). The group eventually identified that Karens (who I suspect were being indirect and polite), were dismayed that laypersons distributed communion (including to Buddhists, as noted above). I observed that communion in the Sgaw service was always presided over by a visiting pastor. I initially thought, based on other observations, that perhaps those called *Therah*, even key people in leadership, were being humble. Only in February 2018 did a final layer of meaning adhere to this, as I assisted one such Karen pastor with the unwieldy paperwork required to become a recognised pastoral leader and seek ordination (see Discussion)[47]. I realised the Karens in Tasmania had no ordained or paid pastor. While in other denominations anyone who professes and demonstrates faith can baptise, in this denomination an ordained pastor is a special role and important to various functions. These Karens would have visiting pastors come regularly, and hold the communion service for them, and perform baptisms. This is also the case in village settings, where travelling ordained pastors perform baptisms during Christmastime gatherings. Karens would often mention to me when they had (official) visitors, and when they would have communion, as a part of urging me to attend their service that day. Baptisms held in the English-speaking service meant that a visiting Karen pastor and the local non-Karen pastor might present these together despite difficulties due to a lack of shared language. For instance, while baptism practices are similar, language caused discomfort as local people could not understand the young people's testimonies (spoken in Sgaw) and those being baptised could not understand the prayers being spoken over them. In one case, once three youth had given testimonies in Sgaw, a fourth was not offered a microphone. It emerged, then, that these Karens hold tight to doctrinal beliefs (in the special role of an ordained pastor), despite needing to rely on outsiders, and face discomfort or delays as arrangements are made for transnational networks to meet ritual and religious needs (see Discussion).

Struggling and writing and settling on scenes

Systematising 'the findings' for this research, and analysing any participant observation, is difficult work (Becker 1958: 653; Musante 2014; Polkinghorne 2007). The focus on overt behaviours rather than issues of meaning (such as ethnic 'identity' concerns) assisted

[47] While I cannot mention the denomination here, this Australian organisation is yet to recognise Therah's four years Pastors' training, mission work and total of 30 years pastoring (ten in Tasmania) either by ordination or stipend; the application process (paper work) is heavy and (in my opinion) insensible to this kind of pastor.

observations to be foregrounded. The observations operate as a mechanism to provide a level of detail adequate to describe the 'natural history' of the research process, show the action and talk, and the key conclusions (Becker 1958: 660; Fine 2003). This was achieved by what I term 'scenes' - ethnographic descriptions that present findings as a first-person narrative (see Bird 2016). These scenes are published to give a picture of the people and resettled lives, demonstrate ethnographic rigor (Fine 2003: 54), and show the emergence of a friendship ethnography. Scenes are presented alongside both initial interpretations and other evidences from the iterative field work, and the challenges and resistances of the actors in the space. This is similar to the analytical 'talk' Fine (1996; 2003) uses to describe the action, and its implications, in many of his ethnographies. For example, in considering how these Karens are settling, I could have taken a 'problem' or identity focus and inquired about the difficulties of settling and keeping culture. But 40 interviews could not help me notice nor understand why *Mu Guah* squatted away from everyone at Sunday lunch, eating her noodles behind the piano. Sustained participation, leading to friendships, however, allowed me into peoples' homes and lives to see the ordinary and the odd. I saw successes with food and family and faith, and struggles with parenting and language and cultural continuity. The friendships that developed meant I was praised for my use of Sgaw, and teased and prayed over for my childlessness, but asked about giving children discipline in Australia. This intimacy allowed me to sense-make about the noodles, as *Mu Guah* shared with me her shame about her unwed daughters' pregnancy. The combination of being there, learning language fragments, witnessing action and events and objects, and interpreting meaning from conversation fragments and pantomimes were briefly and artificially outlined as separate 'modes' in the Methods. Next, the findings give a sense of the messy, rich process of ethnography.

Ch 5 Finding and sharing apace: sociality and settlement

> '…strive for an ethnography awash in behaviour' (Fine 2003: 54).

Preamble

The focus of this chapter is on describing the shared culture and interactions in public spaces, and the ongoing relationships and negotiations between the different groups in the congregation (Part 1), and recounting these Karen lives (Part 2). The ethnographic findings are presented descriptively, with a layer of analysis. In the chapters above, I developed a cohesive ethnographic model from a range of options, I covered the problems of validity for observational data, and I will now explain participants and then do apologetics for the presentation of the writing style in this findings chapter. As for participants, in the introduction I explained my use of familial terms for Karens, and the term 'locals', 'regulars' or 'members' to indicate non-Karen from the community and congregation. I also collapse individual identities into representative people, while the monikers give a greater sense of the kinds of actors and informants at different points of the research. This collapsing serves a methodological purpose in terms of researcher and analytic distance (Fine 2003: 54; see reflective conclusion).

Methodological and literary devices

In order to share lived experiences more vividly, these findings chapters incorporate a deliberate literary device – ethnographic 'scenes'. This switch to a first-person descriptive account in the 'ethnographic present tense' is a tradition among anthropologists for the presentation of empirical findings (Musante 2014; Fine 2003; see examples Fine 1996). This desire to paint a vivid image is inspired by other ethnographies such as Herbert Gans' on urban Italian-Americans (1962), and Mandy Thomas' on Vietnamese-Australian lives (1999). Scenes and narrative have been used more recently for visual research and sensory ethnography (see Wise 2010; Rhys-Taylor 2013; Pink 2009). Narrative is used to make accounts of resettled lives, for example Kathy Burrell's (2006) *Moving Lives* records narratives of nation and migration among mostly Catholic Europeans in post-war Britain. van der Meulen (2009) uses vignettes to show ethnographic observations of African resettler interactions with a local Dutch-speaking congregation. Bird (2016) uses ethnographic description to show a Brisbane Karen wrist-tying ceremony (see Bird et al 2016). Ethnography is 'a long time observing' social or group life, and a detailed 'ethnographic

passage' can give an insight into the conversations and behaviours that happen in this setting (Agar 1980: 190-193). Scenes are an 'accounting of things' which allow the ethnographer to show how explanations and theory were developed (Agar 1980: 190-193). The scenes, then, reveal project design and rapport building, and recount actual observations as prose – a writing style with very different demands to the analytical style. Scenes are appropriate for this study design, which was emergent and focused on participant observation. Scenes replace extensive quotes – not feasible during participant observation, often not possible or meaningful due to language limitations and the need for translation, and often not ethical with this group of participants. The scenes have been constructed to show the multiple social settings, characters and social interactions as broad-brush descriptions of the community. Therefore, I follow each scene with a first level of analysis where I tease out 'what is going on' in the space. In these analytical sections, some briefer descriptions ('extra scenes') will augment the discussion where longer literary-style scenes are less useful. The scenes recount real events and dialogue, but aggregate many observations into a single 'experience'. Thus, the use of scenes also fits with the emergent character of the research design and data analysis process – a process of (iterative) empirical induction.

The scenes offer an eye-witness view of several different kinds of encounters which occurred in different places. These became the different fieldwork sites. The use of multiple sites avoids a narrow focus where generalisations are made that actually reflect particularities of a single setting or type of encounter (Fine 2003: 53). As most of the Tasmanian Karen are Christians[48] their public lives and corporate routines centre around church and church-like events. For the regular church-goers, almost all gather to attend both a 10am service and an 11:30am service at TFC every week[49]. They travel packed together in vans and cars from about a dozen different households. On Sundays, the 10am service is entirely in English. The

[48] Tasmanian Karen families include Seventh-Day Adventists and Catholics in small numbers, and a few do not attend church regularly, some due to work. Through field work especially at Karen social events, but also through University or language-teaching, I met people from Burma's smaller ethnic groups including a Rohingya family (Muslims), and Chin, Shan and Burmese individuals (not refugees). I focus on those who are a part of TFC church but include these broader networks in some of my considerations.

[49] The TFC hosts three overlapping congregations; the 10am, the Karen service (11:30), and a 'street church' drop-in style street-outreach service (2pm). From 2016, a gathering of Filipino families associated with TFC established *Bayanihan* ('the spirit of unity'), a separate home-based service. *Bayanihan* functions around a key family who instigate social gatherings but larger celebration events have included Filipino, Anuak and Karens.

congregation shares a 'cuppa' morning tea together in the church hall, then the Karens meet to conduct their own service in Sgaw at 11:30. They leave the chapel quickly afterwards to gather in one of the Karen homes for a further home-church style service. After this, a shared meal is arranged along the floor of the largest room in the house and eaten before people disperse. Exceptions to this routine occur every second Sunday in the calendar month. I refer to this as 'Tabernacle Sunday', a service that is intended as a combined congregations service at TF followed by a bring-and-share lunch in the hall. In the suburbs, during the week, a core group of Karen families take turns to host several other families at a home church service – a Bible study with songs, every Wednesday night. Karen regularly gather together on a Saturday or Sunday for birthday celebrations with a similar structure to other home services, but with décor and cake. From very early in the field work I visited *Therah's* home every week to take lessons in Sgaw, and later also began a weekly English lesson with a mother (*Naw Wah*) in her home, which was well attended over the years by her family, neighbours and new arrivals. I would visit these families, and a limited number of other people at home occasionally, for example when people returned from hospital, when lessons were cancelled and, rarely, when someone called needing help with some practical matter. I hosted Karen families for meals in my home, sometimes for filling in forms, once for a gardening-bee; and the Karen choir sang at my wedding. Thus, the church and its hall, and the family homes and other places Karen families gathered became the multiple sites for the fieldwork. I also made 'friends' on Facebook with several Karens and this afforded me other insights to their lives, but as online lives are a separate site in terms of ethical considerations, I omit this data[50].

In part one, below, I show scenes which depict Karen-Anglo interactions, in particular the regular weekly encounter at a public church service in English, well attended by Karen families. I prelude this with the history of Karen attendance at the 10am service, and details of members' support and other responses to the arrivals. In part two, I use scenes to depict the routines and practices that characterise Karen resettlement to Tasmania. I describe the weekly service in Sgaw Karen language, and two different kinds of home-church services Karens host together as a family-like unit. Further extra scenes give an aggregate view of the Saturday Sgaw school, and a typical language-exchange encounter between myself and two

[50] For an excellent discussion of the ethics of research and researcher-participant relationships on social network sites see the work of Brady Robards (e.g: Robards (2013) 'Friending participants: Managing the researcher-participant relationship on social network sites', *Young: Journal of Nordic Youth Research*, 21(3): 217-235).

different Karen families. These accounts are designed, in part one, to build a picture for the reader of the multicultural interactions in a religious civic space, and in part two, the resettlement experiences of the Tasmanian Karen. In addition, the scenes and extra scenes show the deployment of methods, and act as a subtle flag for some of the research design challenges of the field.

Part 1 – Multicultural interaction

> SCENE 1 (preview): Tasmania Family Church
> It is Sunday. Walk around a corner and enter a sandstone church. Push through a heavy door into a wide, grand chapel. Two white columns flank an arched bay and timber altar to rise twenty feet to the patterned ceiling. A plain timber cross adorns the bay. Three rows of dark pews run long and close and thick towards the bay and a raised stage. In the centre row a dozen older couples are already seated, just grey hair and cardigans from the back. Waiting in the front row is an Anglo family with five children, and a Pastor reading notes. In the far right-hand row a mix of older Anglos and Filipinos sit dotted about, with two rows full of Ethiopian families, refugees via-Kenya; tall Anuak people in consume. But to the left the pews are crammed with people - Karen families, refugees from Burma via camps in Thailand overflow the row with parents and children and grandmothers and babies and teens, many in Karen clothes. The service is about to start.

The Karens at TFC: a missionary legacy

The sharing of the chapel evident today can be better understood in light of the history of the Karens' arrival in Tasmania, and their early encounters with a past TFC member, which lead to them joining the congregation. In feedback sessions with current and past members I heard the story of Karen arrival in Tasmania, how they joined the church, and Karen and TFC intentions and tensions in these early days. The first Karen family arrived in Tasmania in 2008; a man who limped due to a landmine, and his two adult daughters. Par Di had been a teacher in the refugee camp. Soon, two other families arrived, having met for the first time en route on the flight from Bangkok to Sydney. Therah, and his wife and four of their children were among these first arrivals, and came along to TFC one day with a photograph of the church. He had met Penny, a Tasmanian married to a Thai man, on the Thai border. Therah's family visited Penny's home on their journey to Bangkok and she told them about her home church, and gave Therah a photo of the building, urging him to visit there when he arrived.

Penny had left Tasmania 30 years ago to work as a nurse on the Thai border - she runs a home for disabled children there, and has hosted scores of Christians travelling to and from the camps. On arriving in Tasmania, Therah did show the photo to a number of people in the church. At the time, he knew no-one, and his English was insufficient to explain the story, which could be pieced together from Penny's emails and church member's stories. Tasmanian social encounters, particularly in Christian networks, routinely demonstrate highly integrated networks. The Karen presence at TFC is no exception and follows the strong history of encounters between English-speaking and Karen people of faith.

Supporting new arrivals

The early days of Karen resettlement to Tasmania (from 2008) centres around, but is not exclusive to people attending the Tasmania Family Church. Here, I focus on early interactions between members of the church and Karen arrivals, and later look more closely at some tensions, and how these sustained encounters unfolded. Central to the story of these early days are key people from the regular congregation who met each Karen family as they arrived and helped them to navigate the legal systems and other practical matters. Mr and Mrs H and Mrs M met each family when they arrived, and are remembered fondly as their welcome, and friendly faces gave the new arrivals a feeling 'bright and full of hope' (*Therah*). Mr and Mrs H are among the few members of the church (along with Sunday School teachers, for instance) who know almost all the Karens by name and have an idea about family forms - which can be difficult to determine among these large extended families. The story of early support for arriving Karen centred on transport needs, but also included legal, civic and practical support such as with moving house. Mr and Mrs H dealt with a couple of police matters, and bureaucratic processes such as renting, and acquiring driver licences. Later, paperwork assistance was given to secure home loans.

In conversations with regulars at TFC about new arrivals, providing practical assistance – especially assisting Karen families with transport to church – was a central activity. Most of the Karens live in outer, suburban areas where public transport on Sundays is piecemeal. Mr and Mrs H. said the availability of the local Migrant Resource Centre bus was 'a Godsend' although Mr H. qualified that often, he drove for an hour and made up to three trips in the 12-seater to collect everyone. There was a period where the one bus and two Maxi taxis were used in order to assist Karens to attend, but this was deemed a drain on the small church's budget. Mrs H put it this way 'then after the bus we got two buses [the second procured from

Melbourne by the new Karen Pastor[51]] and it got a bit out of hand and we even got the church to agree to pay for [two] Maxi taxis, for a while'. The Karens seemed to get to a point of independence - and 'at the beginning of a new year, after about two years, and the numbers had increased, and I think we sort of said you can find your own way now, and they would come whizzing in on bicycles, wouldn't they – [the Karen Pastor] included' (Mrs H). Eventually, Mr H had purchased about 30 bikes - about 15 Karens would come to church this way. And that was 'a real status symbol, to have a bicycle' Mrs H explains. But once Karens obtained cars they gave all the bikes back. Mr H indicated the level of work involved with servicing and supplying the second-hand bikes, by joking that the relinquishing of the bikes 'did him out of a job'. Around the time that bikes were being exchanged for cars, at about the two-year mark, there was 'an explosion of car-buying' (Mr H). Mrs H said the Karens 'seemed get around to purchasing cars very quickly', compared to the many other migrant groups with whom she is closely involved. This story reveals that the early (first two to three) years were a time of intense, intentional assistance, and settlement activity by Karens that surprisingly quickly resulted in transport independence (see Part 2).

The scene below is a representation of the TFC congregation and the multicultural interactions, at a regular weekly service. This service is an aggregate of real events from across the years of fieldwork, but is intended to convey first impressions and early observations and encounters. When writing field notes and analytical memos in the early months of fieldwork the physical building and spatial arrangement of bodies, and the rituals that were conducted were the most evident pattern. These have been selected to populate the scene and provide focus for the analysis that follows, as an initial 'in' to this multicultural space.

[51] This Therah's bus had been the property of Victorian Karen. Tasmanian Karen take up regular collections and these pay for petrol. Another *Therah* was hesitant about the purchase of the bus initially due to these cost burdens on the community – a concern common to Karen leaders elsewhere (see Bird et al 2016:80).

SCENE 1: The 10am service at Tasmania Family Church

Sunday mornings I walk around the corner to the sandstone chapel which has stood there since 1887. A brand-new sign out the front announces in English that the church has three service times and lists the pastors' names. The new logo appears there - a ring of multi-coloured sections like stained glass. A friendly gent greets me by name inside the high entrance, his grey whiskers are shaved neatly. I take my name badge and enter a heavy door on the left. The church has two aisles dividing three substantial sections of very long pews. The chapel was built to seat 300 and the seating and aisles are as they were re-arranged by the congregation in the 1950s. I choose a seat among the back four rows of the centre section which is taken up by a Karen family I know well, and their relatives. Most of the younger single women and teen girls occupy the back-most two rows. They smile shyly and we exchange a brief greeting in English but they are a very close-knit group. The family and I are soon forced to cram further along the pew to allow another Karen family to sit with us - I am thigh and shoulder against *Paw Mu* even though the pew is empty after Naw and her sister. While I can only smile at her sister I can ask *Paw Mu* something in English, asking about her oil burn. She shows me a bad blister and said it hasn't healed 'because I put in water', going on to explain that in the camp toothpaste is the preferred remedy. As the 10am service starts, the Karen boost numbers by over half the congregation. Their families and older people fill the left hand section of pews to capacity, excepting the first few rows which are left empty except for the organ player. Most of the remaining congregation are dotted sparsely about the chapel in their regular seats. This means a missing face is conspicuous, but I already know who is away and why in this small community; perhaps a wedding interstate or travelling. I count 72 Karen and there are 39 regular members, plus seven youth. Today there are 34 adults among the Karens, 23 teens and 15 children, including one babe in arms. Young families sit together but clusters of younger boys, teen girls and much older women are obvious groupings. Numbers seem a bit down today, but sometimes they are up - usually because Karen visitors attract more irregular Karen along, or it is a popular service time such as at the monthly Tabernacle service, or Mother's Day. Those are the best days. The small children are moving about the aisles to find favourite aunties or a young person to climb on. I see a lanky Karen boy with a trendy fringe entertaining a child he knows well, and a small boy wandering the aisle gives me a grin and starts showing off, lifting up his blue Karen shirt so only the tassels cover his belly. The

10am service has a simple and consistent structure. I see from the bulletin there will be three songs, a hymn during the offering, a pastoral prayer, a sermon from the senior pastor, and a further two songs to end. The notice welcomes everyone to join morning tea in the hall behind the chapel after the service.

The piano and guitars start up and everyone stands. Tall Jaw is on the drums this week: he and his brother take turns with another regular player, to keep the beat. I hear the girls behind me join in on the singing in English. They know this one now. *Therah* (Pastor) is near me, eyes trained intently on the overhead, just reading. I recognise his gaze as one I adopt when song sheets in Sgaw are available. We are both very earnest learners. In the crowd to my left only a few Karen voices join in on the songs. Those who do sing along are those I know best - those with more English. The others, now familiar faces but whose lives are still a mystery to me, just stand with their kids and friends around them. As we go to sit down the Pastor encourages us to greet each other as is the custom here in the morning. I shake hands with the girls and say good morning again, and ensure I greet several others on the left with a *Wallah ghey* (good morning). The hands and smiles are warm; with Karens I also say 'how are you' or respond in Sgaw, and chat to a few of my friends and regulars about small things. The Pastor calls us back to our seats and makes some announcements, and a very old hymn is played on the organ. An offering is taken up. The singing is quiet as the regulars know it, but the Karens and I are lost. It is quiet enough to hear the clink of coins and the children make a contrast to the solemnity of the ritual, darting over to mums and aunts and uncles and squeezing in, hands out-stretched over the pews to receive a coin. I see every Karen man woman and child drop a coin or two into the handsome red velvet bags. Then, the bags are taken to the front and the Pastor says a prayer of thanks over them, while heads are bowed. Another song is led by the band. The Pastors daughter offers a prayer from behind her guitar, and the children are directed to leave for Sunday School for the duration of the sermon. There is a minor riot as small bodies and teachers squeeze out of the narrow pews past the knees of others in the rows, and swarm up the aisles, heading back out the front doors behind us. The girls near me have all gone out too. Mrs E tells me Karen teens don't leave Sunday School as expected, but stay on and make great helpers. Peace descends and the Bible is being read. I note the passage in the back of the bulletin, and the Karens around me are not following along. While the Pastor comes up to deliver the sermon I note the passage in the back of the bulletin, and pass it forward to Naw, who uses the English to find the right passage in the *lee saw hs'gee* (holy book - the Bible in Sgaw) on iPad. I have my iPad open to the Sgaw Bible

as well, and locate the verse, offering it across to a fellow down the row from me – *pah g'nyaw gloh ah?* (read Karen language?) I ask him. His only confirmation is to read along with me while the sermon is delivered.

From my vantage point I see the back of people's heads, and faces in profile on either side. All the Karens to my left are distinctive with their jet-black hair and smooth features – each one wears something distinctly Karen. The rest of the congregation are sparse in comparison, all grey heads and dignified outfits. They sit as couples or small groups in the seats to the front and right of me. These regulars are empty nesters – older couples excepting a few who now attend alone with spouses passed away, or in aged care facilities. I envy them their front-and-centre position - it is well away from the cold breeze that always blows from the front doors behind me onto the back of my neck. But I need the view from here, and the company. Among these faces there are few non-Karen who attend as families - the Pastor and one other family with adult children, including the youth pastor. A further two non-Karen families have younger children – a Filipino couple with two little ones, and a family with six children who have just all left to attend and run the Sunday school. Aside from this, the age and ethnic groups are polarised – Karen families and older Anglo couples. I am an odd one in the gloomy middle: single, childless, and generation X. I see Karen newlyweds are not sitting together today but are with their Karen peers of the same gender. There are Bibles in English on the end of every pew, but Karens do not open them. *Therah* near me is in the *lee saw hs'gee* but not the same passage; he reads handwritten notes in Sgaw, perhaps reviewing his own sermon for later today. I put my collar up against the cold and check out what everyone else is wearing. A father in front of me has parachute style sports-clothing and a tee shirt, his wife is in a dark green Karen skirt and white tunic with pink embroidery that matches her socks and sandals. There is mayhem as children and their colourful pages of art are reunited with their families. We sing two more songs and hear the benediction before streaming out to the hall.

Morning tea is urns of tea and coffee, packet biscuits and catching up with regulars. The Karens gather loosely at one end of the hall near the kids table. Here, the cordial, water and cream wafers don't last long. I say hello to a few older ladies who greet me and I inquire after Mr G who is shuffling along today – he's got knee trouble. His wife joins us and asks about my research. I respond it is going well as the Karens are here

every week and meet after until four in the afternoon. Mrs G remarks they put us to shame don't they. Behind our conversation *Paw Kwa* rushes about, red cheeked chasing another boy. He knocks the back of the older man's knee, who winces. The couple soon excuse themselves and I see the boy pause in flight. I bend down and hold his little body, hey be careful of the old man, I say, pointing to the retreating back – you can run outside ok, take your friend. I go and pour a coffee, and help a few others use the urn. I wander over to stand among the Karens and just hang about. I see some excitement at the back table and go to check it out. There is a big clear bag of lettuce today, maybe from the Hmong market gardens. I nod to *Therah*, he draws close to me and I confirm the vegetables are from his wife? Yes, you can take, he encourages me in English, with a gesture. I hold the bag for others then take a bunch, saying thank you. I make eye contact and say hello to some little girls and their mother. They squirm about, smiling. I see a very old woman near them I haven't seen before, bundled in layers of jackets. Her pinched face peers out from under a pink beanie. The fleece pants under a striped longyi cover her thin knees. I establish in Sgaw that she is the girls' *Pi* (grandmother)? Yes, say the girls. She is visiting, says Naw proudly, three months. I puzzle this over and work out later that the little girl means Grandma has come from the camp, but she must be here to stay, on a family reunion visa. Pi is silent, just looking ahead, perhaps resting, perhaps lacking speech, or teeth. Karens mingle among themselves, and do not linger. They are sitting back in the chapel before I know it and, armed with a small thermos, I am the last to duck back in with them, today the only outsider.

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Space and social relations

Formulations of space as visions of the world

American Anthropologist Edward Hall recognised the organisation of space in a building or town as an 'unconsciously structured micro space' (1963, cited in Danesi 2008: 140-141). Structuring principles in the space of TFC relate to the co-presence of culturally different groups. The space and action are deeply shaped by the demographic - a core group of older people, and over twice as many Karen in young, often large families. At the 10am service a small, core group of people run each element of the service and Karen participation in this group is limited to a drummer. For example, the Karen arrive as a group, sit as a group and

socialise as a group. The regulars do the same. The spatial separation is subtle in the 10am service, where groups are visible - it is only more overt in the Karen service where I am the sole 'outsider'. At first glance, the dramatic visual division of space both in the chapel pews, and in the hall during morning tea seem to mirror linguistic and cultural divisions.

Formulations of space are also visions of the world (Barcan and Buchanan 1999:7-8). Lived space can be separated into the material (architecture, bricks and mortar, doors and fences) and the semiotic (signs, laws and traditions), which can remain unspoken (Hodge 1999: 59). Barcan and Buchanan (1999:7-8) extend this argument to see that space

> should be understood as a tool designed to carry out a specific, but not unchanging set of cultural tasks… we can perhaps see this best when we cease to ask what space represents and instead inquire into what it does

So, in examining what the material space achieves in terms of 'cultural tasks' I cannot set aside for a moment that there are different cultures and practices present. In fact, due to the particulars of the location, Western, Karen, and Christian culture are co-present in the space[52]. The space acts to assert a number of Western cultural assumptions (see Barcan and Buchanan 1999; Goffman 1983; Hodge 1999; Wise 2010). The stage separates and elevates those who direct the service from the congregation. There are places for the band, and places for people to sit on pews and chairs, but there is no room between the pews to sit on the floor, for instance. At the very back of the chapel, at either side where the rows of pews end, there is a rectangle of carpet with more pews arranged around it hard up against the back and side walls. This would traditionally be used as family area, a place where mothers could place youngsters on the floor and have ready access to the back door, through which to remove noisy or dirtied children. But here, the space is not used in this way, with Karen teen boys gathering on the left, and on the right (the old location of the sound desk) the void is used by middle aged members to stretch, and people from the street church sometimes kneel and pray, or cry and are comforted in this space.

Also, in the space while non-English speakers are present, and represent a majority, English

[52] Over four years other ethno-linguistic groups connected to the church have formed. Two Filipino families are now a group of a few dozen who have formed a home church. Once the Anuak families arrived from 2017 they have been included with the Filipino group for meals, and a few the more recent Karen celebration events became multicultural events.

is used exclusively from the stage. Thus, at the 10am service, while Karen people are present in number, their language is marginal, missing from the formal proceedings. There is no Sgaw used on the new church sign, nor is Sgaw used in the notice sheet and on the overhead projectors[53]. Wise (2010, 2011) discusses how signs in home languages represent 'success' and homemaking among Chinese entrepreneurs (shopkeepers), and yet provoke discomforts for other residents. Thus, in the space of TFC, the language and features of the dominant cultural group prevail while features of the majority group - particularly their language - are silenced, rendered incomprehensible or invisible to the non-Other.

On space, symbols and interaction

In order to further examine the social setting, the dynamics of the church can be explored as an interactional space. The crush of bodies along a long, half-empty pew demonstrate a collision of different cultural assumptions and behaviours. The traditional pews give ample 'personal space' between persons sitting in the same row, at the expense of space between rows. But Karens demonstrate a much narrower definition of personal space. Here, I use what Danesi introduces as *proxemics* - 'how people perceive and organise the zones they maintain between each other in culturally specific situations' (Danesi 2008:140). There is inadequate space between rows of pews for moving about – even children must squeeze past to exit the rows. In the church culture I am familiar with, those who serve are expected to arrange to sit on the end of a row, and not disrupt others by invading their space, just as the spaces at the very back of each side row of pews is the designated area for mothers with young children. The pew spaces are not designed to accommodate the number of active children that currently attend, nor do any mothers seem inclined or invited to use the spaces at the back of the chapel. While the pews have been fixed in places since a remodel in the 1950s (see Rowston 1984), during 2016 one long pew from the middle of the central row was removed to allow a sound desk to be positioned - and a wheelchair access sign appeared. On one occasion prior (Mother's Day), a member had brought his aged mother to the service in a wheelchair. There is ample room in the building for a row of pews to be removed from the left to accommodate small children, but others in the congregation would thus loose some 'space'. Refugees are a

[53] Sgaw Karen is relatively obscure but there are 6 million Karens and the fonts (script) are readily obtainable online – some Tasmanian Karen youth use it and I am able to type Bible verses and small notices if the necessary words are known to me and in one of the small dictionaries.

group constructed as a threat to 'our space' and 'our culture' (Cresswell 2014: 184, 185). Yet perhaps too, while Karen culture and adaptation are in flux in this new space, they relish the press of others, and sit close by even when space permits distance. This compressed 'Karen' use of space can be seen as a continuation of obligatory arrangements for gathering spaces and school rooms in the overcrowded refugee camps (see Background). Thus, the space is 'bound' by cultural norms from both groups; but spaces carry assumptions about how they will be used, and while humans are good at decoding these messages, spaces and expectations can restrict alternative uses (see Hodge 1999:68).

Examining physical context alone, TFC appears to be firmly set within the dominant, normative culture of Western sociality - which can manifest as an invisible organising principle, even 'structural advantage' for members of the dominant culture. The patterned use of space within the church reveals who belongs by who is 'front and centre' and mark as 'foreign' those ill-fitted or marginal to the space. The visual marginality of Karens to the physical 'edges' of the church space (along with those who occupy the left-hand side and back rows of seats) is a powerful marker of social position when contrasted with the different spatial arrangement evident at their own services (see Scene 3). However, I acknowledge agency: Karens have to some extent chosen, and asked where to sit – for instance, after the first Karen arrivals had attended the English-speaking service a few months, they requested a place to meet and were given an upstairs room. Their numbers were small but grew steadily and quickly outgrew the space. Within about a year they requested the use of the chapel after the English-speaking service, and 'with God's help' (*Therah*) this was granted. Thus, the Karens were instrumental in moving from a marginal, small space, to the largest, grandest space – one that affords electronic sound amplification, and community-size gatherings. Given the relative rigidity of seating choices in the chapel, some combination of regulars yielding, and Karen encroachment has occurred in the space. Old photos of the congregation in the chapel show that regulars occupied the left row of pews, and sat in the spread-out manner described in Scene 1 (see Rowston 1984). When the different social gatherings located in the chapel are compared, and contrasted with the use patterns over time, both compromise and continuity is evident. Following the next scene, I depart from 'dystopic scholarship' (Wise and Velayutham 2009) to see how shared practices, participation and gestures develop frameworks of

meaning, and constitute 'multicultural conviviality'. This scene is also set in the chapel, but describes a quite different service, and the analysis to follow teases out what is going on in this closer frame.

SCENE 2: Tabernacle Sunday – a combined service for TGC congregations

I am warmly welcomed into the building by *Pi's* handshake and her husband *Pu's* usual darling grin. Her hair is smoothed back with a flower and he has on a waistcoat of Karen fabrics. Tabernacle Sunday is a service where all the congregations combine at 10 am, every second Sunday of the month. There is a celebratory air, and the chapel is packed.

Mel is there, a one-time backpack-medic to the TBB who came to visit the TFC, and stayed 'because of the Karen'. We say hello but she spies another friend and moves to the front so I sit with the girls at the back, and we all revel in how full it is - I love it like this, *Mu Eh* says. Everyone is dressed up and I do a little gasp oh, a lovely *niih* I say, admiring the golden embroidery. The skirt is a new one, from Thailand, *Mu Eh* says, marking both elaborations with a little raise of her eyebrows. A sandalwood scent in the air attests to the scrubbing and soaping that accompanied preparations for church. Little girls have shiny braids and bigger girls have bright high heels. A kids' song is listed in the bulletin. I love the Sunday School songs as they are usually something fun performed with actions and lots of useful Sgaw to learn. We are welcomed with two songs, and the band sounds good a bit bigger - little LL has joined the other singers and MB is on the drum kit. We are welcomed by the youth pastor John to this diverse church that we are here and encouraged to greet each other. I turn around to two new girls behind me. They are wearing the traditional longyi, but with tee shirts - the older women have reversed this and prefer pants with Karen tunics under neat blazers. 'Visiting from the camp?' I say, careful to include all the girls behind me in the question, 'yes, they are from Thailand' *Mu Moo* explains. I extend a hand to each. Hello, welcome, I say quietly. They both cross their bodies with their left arm as they extend the other, still doing politeness the Karen way and too shy to use any English yet. I move into the crowded aisle, a lot of hand-shakes happen, and I hear Mrs. G attempt a flat *wallah gay* to a few Karen. *Naw Wah* gives me a huge hug and we exchange a 'how are you, God bless you' in her laughing English. Her husband's English is well established but he says '*Y'wa oh suu klay ah*' with a teasing grin. I am ready this time and reply 'God bless you too'. I go around the back of the pews, trying to shake hands with the boys and uncles there that I know before

the youth pastor John is at the pulpit trying to restore order.

Everyone piles back into the narrow pews. Announcements are given and John prays for the service. John begins a 'heroes of the Bible' quiz, handing out jelly snakes to the winners. Near me a couple of teenagers nudge their siblings urgently, and I hear answers but only regulars call out. Mrs. C answers, and from our vantage point behind her, the girls and I see her snake get dismembered with Mr. C - 'true love!' *Mu Eh* exclaims. Little *Paw Kwa* has wandered over to me and lolls about on the seats and in my lap, totally at ease after the months of visits to his home. He plays with my handbag, making curious noises and posing questions in English - he's gone from silence to stream-of-conscious talk since going to school, it's amazing. We sing again and a hymn is played on the organ for the offering to be taken up. *Pu* advances slowly down our aisle, his left hand cradles his right forearm in the Karen gesture of politeness as he offers out the double-handled bag to the family in front of me. I see a small blue tattoo on his leathery hand. It is the two simple lines that form a crucifix. The ushers process back down to the front and the bags are prayed over. A pastoral prayer follows, with Mrs. M praying for persecuted Christians, refugees and those who face natural disaster, that they would see justice, peace and assistance from international governments and a response from us too, for compassion, prayer and practical aid both here and abroad.

John announces the Karen choir will perform a song in 'their language' for us, a very special time, so if the Karen would like to come up? They pause a beat, looking to one another, and only when the Karen Pastor makes a move and nods to them do they gather unhurriedly on the stage and, taking a mic, the Therah gives us the gist of the song in English. The senior pastor takes the mic away and the choir leader, Jaw Ki sounds out a note in a clear baritone. He says *ta blu* (thank you) abruptly. The choir burst into an a Capella and the harmonies are incredible. Today the song is a tune I know well but words still escape me. There are only nine adults on stage today, but there are up to 15 in the choir. I notice that a newly married young woman has joined the choir this week. From the gold wedding bands, I know the choir members are all married or once-married: but men and women alike are missing their counterparts. The choir are almost all dressed in some piece of Karen clothing, tunics and longyis of all colours and designs. John invites all the children to the front. The whole Sunday School and crèche crowd around; about thirty kids plus mums with little ones are sitting on the stage. A big white sheet is brought out and people at each corner raise it over

the children's heads like a roof. It has colourful paint handprints of all sizes scattered over it. N explains how it symbolises we are all one in Christ. Each person holding the sheet prays in turn over the children, two in English and then Therah and then Naw the Sunday School teacher pray in Sgaw. The sheet is dropped on the children and they all laugh and scramble out from under it, back to their places. During another song led by the band a Karen teenager hands out colouring-in sheets and pencils to each child, and he marks attendance on a sheet. There is one wrapped lolly in each plastic case. The Bible verse for today is read out. I find the passage on my iPad, in the *Lee saw hs'gee*. I lean over and say *ner hpa g'nyaw ah?* (read in Karen?), offering the iPad to the older ladies who are now beside me. They murmur something, poking their eyes - no good they seem to say. A short sermon is delivered as the small children colour and the Karen mums and girls get stuck into the find-a-words.

After a final song, reminder of the bring-and-share lunch in the hall afterwards and the benediction, everyone near me scrambles out to the hall. I spot Mu, she has on one of my old concert tee-shirts but wraps her cardigan around it self-consciously with a beautiful grin so I just give her shoulders a squeeze. *Mu Ke* takes my other arm, elegant in a long white Karen dress and heeled sandals. We exchange 'hello, how are you' before she is whisked away by some girls, peppering her with adoring questions in Sgaw. The new teens have settled at the back with a cluster of others around a boy picking at an unplugged electric guitar; they are intent over songbooks handwritten in Sgaw. I take a seat near the guitarist, we have a nodding acquaintance. I smell cooking on his clothing, a breakfast of spices and fish, or preparations for lunch. I ask about the song but am unable to break into the chatter. The new girls are still holding hands tightly but making friends here. I chat to Mu about high school; she finds it good, but the study difficult. A Pastor greets us as we exit, one handshake each before we head into to the hall. I crowd in with Karen women queuing in the Ladies for a free stall. I smile and they fix their skirts, opening the front fold and tucking it tightly back. One eyes me in the mirror as she washes her hands and spits expertly, bullseye in the plughole. The ramp down to the hall is crowded with Karen teens and kids hanging back, so I say 'hey' and 'come see' and have to lean over the handrail to place a couple of bags of second hand clothing on the table below. I get bags of hand-me downs from my nieces but the fashions are beyond me. Someone else has put some bits and pieces out too - rummages of this kind are common on Tab Sunday, and everything seems to go to a new home. I get a coffee and head back through the crowd to where the Karens cluster on one side of the hall - they are a big group but never fill the room, just stick to a wide strip of carpet along the short side of the

hall, babies and kids akimbo. I wander up beside *Naw Wah* just as Pi somehow has the Sunday School kids all assemble on the carpet to sing *Mose kopo nego di leh* (How did Moses cross the red sea?). During lessons at her house *Naw Wah* and I have swapped the Sgaw and English words for this song, with much hilarity. The children's song goes;

> How did Moses cross the red sea? x3 How did he get across?
> Did he walk, no no. Did he run, no no. Did he fly? No, no, no, no!
> God blew with the wind puff puff puff puff, he blew just enough nuff, nuff, nuff,
> and through the sea, God made a path, that's how he got across.

Where the English is 'puff puff' the Karen push a deep and hearty 'ooh, ooh oooh oooh' from their diaphragms - they are truly a people who sing. Rightly, *Naw Wah* found the English 'nuff nuff nuff' hilarious, and so, in the party atmosphere I meet her eye and sing along with that bit in English. She throws her head back to laugh, nudging and saying something in rapid Sgaw to her husband, indicating me and setting them both chuckling.

The food is being assembled on the tables and much of it is literally white bread but Karen families have a roster and prepare and bring in a single contribution in turn - an outsize saucepan of fish soup or an Esky filled directly with fried rice or savoury noodles - they know how to do food *big*. I continue my conversation and join the banter as join the long line up for a plate of mixed things: fried rice from the Esky, plain lettuce from the plate of boiled eggs, a hedgehog meatball and a slice of potato from a bake. I crouch against the wall with one of the Karen mums, and we eat together and just watch the kids play with the treasures they've found from the rummage table. The Karen cooks don't add chili to the food they bring, but often have a bowl of fiery paste circulating. Its pandemonium in the hall and difficult to be heard, adding to the usual language efforts. Here on the strip of carpet to the left of the hall is very crowded and Karen people are sitting on top of the stacks of chairs against the left wall, and squat against other walls or find a bit of table and chair to use. I help a little one kneeling to eat off a seat to hold his plate of food and then go to gather up plates - *Pi* I say, to an older fellow, then we both laugh - *wee tha sg'oo!* I apologise in Sgaw - I have just called him grandma and it is not the first time. I stop to chat with Mrs. H, she has some forms for Karen people, can I pass one onto *Therah*? I agree, and nod hello to some of the other regulars sitting in circles of chairs, holding plates of food and socialising. I head to the kitchen: *Mu Guah* is there. She is tall for a lady, huge for a Karen. She may be Burmese but I've never managed to get a word from her, but she has smiled twice for me - not in any

photographs though. We wash up and then it's me and Mrs. N left clearing the last of the dishes - I chat to her about her early days. She married into the church in the 60s so agrees she's seen a lot of change here at TFC. Rather than talk about the evident ethnic diversity, however, she recalls for me the main difference for her: back then, we were all having our children, she said, so the Sunday School was literally 'hundreds' of kids[54].

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TFC as an oasis of (increasing, visible) ethnic diversity

The Karens are an ethnically distinct group of Tasmanians that are co-located at this church each week as a congregation. As celebrated by the youth pastor, the church does have an ethnically diverse congregation; for Tasmania. But the 'diversity' is more evident at the Tabernacle service than in the usual morning services, both in rhetoric and practice. The Karen majority have joined the original, predominantly older congregation and their presence has prompted attendance by a sprinkle of people who fit neither category, but are often attracted by the diversity. Again, the action is shaped by the people here - older folk and Karen families. On the monthly Tabernacle Sunday, the core group of people who make the service happen are both Karen and Anglo. Here, unlike in the 10am service, Karens are not only present, they participate. While participation still remains somewhat fixed within predetermined parameters (especially the order of service), there is 'more space' for participation in this service. And, the participation happens in both formal ways – as a part of the service structure, including from the stage - and in informal or social ways. Participation can be playful, or evident in the tacit and sensory, from the look or feel or smell of things people bring into the space.

Participation as formal, informal, physical, playful and meaningful

In terms of the formal proceedings, were the action is regulated by the order of service, the Karen people and other congregants have set roles at set times, but rather than restricting action, this structure builds in a level of participation and inclusion. The Karens get involved by taking positions as usher or greeter, and take up the offering, pray and sing. None require much English, some require none, and within the Tabernacle service some prayers and songs require Karens' own language (for those who are Sgaw). The childrens' prayer includes different languages (and later, Anuaks are included to pray). While the playfulness of the

[54] A history of the church reveals that an all-age Sunday School opened in the 60s, with almost a hundred adults; a total of 365 including children attended (Rowston 1984).

Bible quiz was enjoyed, the kids packs provided a place for all ages to engage and each child to receive something. Sgaw is more present in the Tabernacle service, but the visual form is still marginal – Sgaw script does not appear on the notice sheet, or overhead projections; it is only accessed by those with the *Lee saw hs'gee*. English dominates, so while several songs, the sermon and even Bible reading remain a mystery to many of the Karen adults, they continue to share the space, joining in at pre-determined moments. Hellos happen in English from Karens, and in Sgaw from a few non-Karen. So, language has been exchanged, if only a speck. The informal, social, and often quite physical interactions at different times during the different services provide different ways to connect. These interactions are both 'scripted' or proscribed, and spontaneous. Hugs and handshakes occur at both the 10am and Tabernacle services during the 'greeting time' before the service begins, and by people who are allocated the role of greeter. After one or two songs, congregants are encouraged to greet those around them. Conversations might be brief here, but the intentionality of being 'combined' on Tabernacle Sunday shifts the mood and leaves more 'space' for mingling. The celebratory air sparks off conversations. New Karen clothing, new babies and Karen propensity to wear anything new to church first, becomes an obvious visible element that can start spontaneous conversation, ease the tension of difference, language barriers and mutual incomprehension. Cross-cultural social interactions are occurring here due to deliberate and serendipitous features of the interaction space.

Spatial, temporal and symbolic constraints

Despite the chapel and hall appearing as an oasis for culturally diverse mingling, there are spatial and temporal elements which restrict the congregants, including the Karens. For instance, there are times that quiet is expected, and a mobile phone or conversation would be a disruption, but other times where chat, movement and audience participation are invited, or expected. But sometimes there is a pause in the flow of participation - the invitation or expectation to participate is missed, due to language or shyness – so the choir members miss their cue, Karens hesitate to come forward, are not awarded for correct answers. Different body placements and spatial features of each 'group' are evident too. Most starkly, the Karens themselves appear to actively restrict their own movements and 'being' in both the chapel and the hall. In the chapel the Karens mostly all sit together in the left row of pews, and the rear of the middle row. They do contain themselves, and to a certain extent the children, 'to the side' of the hall during lunch. While during the combined service and shared lunch, the distance between the groups mean they do not seem to mingle - to not really eat

nor talk together, this belies the reality that the space is shared, and fleeting encounters are still significant (Wise and Velayutham 2009: 3; Wise 2005).

Nods, handshakes and the meaning of gestures

Care must be taken not to valorise only deep relationships, as social interactions necessarily involve both 'intimate and sustained encounters' and 'fleeting' ones (Wise and Velayutham 2009: 3). In Scene 1, shallow interaction - a smile, a handshake, contributing or taking some lettuce - can constitute an act of reciprocity, an initial encounter that could build over time. Wise suggests these 'shallow' actions may carry no expectation or capacity for deeper attachment but are indicative of mental assent to a person's worth and belonging in the space (see Wise 2005). The senses register touch and connection in physical ways, and by looking, eye contact, and gesture people demonstrate relationship (Pink et al 2016). Touches, especially handshakes are a favoured greeting and established mark of respect among Karens and Australians alike. A handshake can be a powerful gesture, an embodied form of regard (see Musante 2014: 252). When shaking hands with someone of another language or group, the body and face and hands of a person can be 'read' for meaning and emotion (Cartwright 2012, cited in Pink et al 2015). As this gesture was a shared one it can operate as a powerful indicator of belonging, agreement and friendship (see Musante 2014; Pink et al 2016). So, a nodding recognition may lead to friendship or may not, but to see and be seen is recognition. In the space exchanges are somewhat stuck at a non-verbal level, so the visual and non-verbal and ritual become salient – the language of the 'other' is not very accessible, but human eye and physical contact, and predictable action keep 'communication' happening. The space provides a place to gather and enact these gestures, and to participate, even contribute to something. But by turning up at church dressed up, and by reaching out a hand, Karens and non-Karens send messages and share meanings (continued in Part 2). The shared meal is quite a powerful time as the action gives a solid foundation for intercultural togetherness - even sitting separately there is a sense that the 'light-touch company' is an enjoyable experience (Wise and Velayutham 2009:1). And regulars have developed an embodied familiarity (see Rhys-Taylor 2010; Pink et al 2016). We may not say a word to each other, but to sit by someone, eat with them, watch a child together, share a laugh and the washing up is every-day 'conviviality' (Wise and Velayutham 2014). These behaviours were occurring across the hall as people rubbed shoulders, quite literally, in the shared space. These are what Wise would call 'hopeful' encounters (2005, see Discussion). A church service would be pointless without the congregants, so each has a symbolic contribution to

make. Karens bring themselves, their active participation, and colourful clothing and culture into the space. So, the contribution is not only the intangible inputs such as taking the role of worshiper or server - Karens contributed convivial gestures and tangible things – surplus lettuces, donated coins, and cultural foods and clothes.

Food, clothing and the meaning of things

Shared food and the casual exchange of goods is not only a visual and physical element of groups mixing, it is a sensory element. Things and food have emotional and cultural values (see Musante 2014). Smells or food transmit hints of sameness and difference. Some smells and food can be othering and may disgust or repel (Wise 2010; Musante 2014; see the work of Mary Douglas 1968). But by the time of this research at least, Karens were conscious that for Australians, chili was unfamiliar, and chicken heads were not a prize find in soup. In the space of the chapel efforts to present mutually palatable food – Karens omit chili, the regulars include mutually beloved and recognised dishes like fried rice and eggs - operate to 'smudge' harsh boundaries (Rhys-Taylor 2013). Given these allowances in the church space and the social context where 'others' enjoy 'their' food, cultural (and taste) differences can begin to be backgrounded as just 'part of the wallpaper' (Wise 2010: 90 cited in Rhys-Taylor 2013: 395). This smudging, however, may be insufficient to render some smells and sights acceptable to those less accustomed to them. For example, wild caught fish predominates in Karen food while Australians can find it unpleasant (see Wise 2010), and betel chewing and the associated spitting can seem 'dirty' (Ferber et al 2013). What is 'out of place' is often associated with dirt, danger or pollution, and can be discrediting or taboo (see Douglas 1968, cited in Cresswell 2014: 166). Karen occupancy in the space of the church hall means that betel chewing, *tha na ka*, tattoos, crowded conditions and a lot of noise and small children are interposed into a rather confined, rather conservative space. This cultural disjuncture around body distance and crowding is a common point of discomfort in cross-cultural mixing (Wise 2010). Some may sense the chaos as an enjoyable carnival, and while others experience distaste. The combination of food and chaos has a range of consequences – older couples leave when hearing aids are unable to cope with the noise, Mu complains the 'white' Australian food is 'too much sweet', and little Po Kwa, bumped while standing in the usual melee, got a serious burn from hot soup. The different smells and flavours present in a space, and visual elements, can 'transmit culture' and represent the other – and this can bring the comfort of sameness or anxiety about difference (Rhys-Taylor 2013; Wise 2010). Micro

publics are not only the setting for the mundane - there may also be very practical problems layered into the micro spaces of intercultural contact.

Missed signs: discomforts, mistranslation and misrecognition

Wise and Velayutham describe the everyday 'rubbing along' that happens in multicultural spaces (2009:1-2). Yet as spaces are shaped by cultural coding, and require decoding, so expectations can collide or be constrained (see Hodge 1999), and actions can be misread. For example, Wise's (2010) suburban 'high street' ethnography discovered that older Anglo ladies found brisk interactions with Chinese shopkeepers rude, while the retailers felt shy about dialog and causing a delay. So, while the interaction in church can be seen as ordinary, it is neither all a rosy picture nor uneventful, as multicultural interactions include moments where cultural and other meanings are 'missed' by community members, or things 'rub up the wrong way'. These discomforts take a number of forms, and not all are to do with 'cultural' differences per se. For example, while Karens bring colourful clothing and culture into the space these can fail to 'translate' as valued commodities, and other interpretations of Karens being in the space are possible. So, where I esteem little children taught to give, another member laments the counting and banking of hundreds of coins each week. The party atmosphere attracts the youth, but the crowd and the thirty active children has caused trouble. *Therah*, wearing a priestly robe to a local ordination, went unrecognised as a pastor there, so was not invited to the stage to sit or pray or speak, and so sat with the crowd. So even after a decade of space sharing, miscommunications have created small slights and surprises, even some 'nuisance' to the smooth operation of the interaction, and the church. These dimensions of space are expanded on, when Karen use of the space is considered, in Part 2.

Conclusion to Part 1

Part 1 of this chapter has used scenes to present research findings around everyday multicultural interactions as vignettes. These accounts have aggregated many observations of a single location into one representative 'scene' to build a picture of the 'everyday practice' and lived experience of diversity among the Anglo and Karen congregations who encounter each other at TFC. Wise calls these spaces the 'micro public' or 'context of encounter' (cited in Neal 2015: 993). The initial layer of analysis applied to these micro spaces is similar to the work of Gary Fine, in his many ethnographic descriptions that carry theoretical propositions about small group interaction (see Fine 2003). The impact of these interactions - and how community cultures change with the addition of new arrivals - is an important missing piece

within refugee resettlement research (see Neumann 2016). The small everyday places are of increasing interest to migration scholarship, due to increasing recognition of the distinct experiences of different migrant groups (Burrell 2013), change over time, and continuity of interaction.

Part 2 – Karen resettlers

> The empirical social world consists of ongoing group life and one has to get close to this world to know what is going on in it (Blumer 1987: 38).

This section focuses on observations of the Karen community and gives initial commentary (first-level analysis), leaving aside some themes for the discussion chapter. As noted in the introduction, the aim of the findings is to build a picture, and to demonstrate ethnographic rigor by publishing field notes that show, through action and talk, instances that support the claims being made (Fine 2003: 54). I begin with a general introduction to the local Karen, then give a scene showing the church service they host each week (conducted in Sgaw and incorporating a meeting), and their home-church service (a Bible study with hymns and often a choir practice). I then use scenes to show gatherings for a birthday party (held like a home-church service or family Bible study), a language exchange session (English teaching) and a personal visit to a Karen family home. As I describe each scene, I dial the lens in closer to observe the use of public spaces, then practices in more private settings. As the scale winds in to more intimate settings the increments roughly map onto my growing acquaintance with, and awareness of the Karen resettler experience– which is shaped by context, culture, community capitals, challenges, and priorities. I follow each scene with an analytical discussion where I tease out 'what is going on' in the space.

The Tasmanian Karen

The Karens in Tasmania are over 40 families – they have grown from nine people resettled in 2008 to at least 160 (just those affiliated with the TBC) during the first year of my research, to around 260 at the time of writing (early 2018). The Karens join other similar but distinct ethnic groups from Burma – the Hmong, who were a significant community in Hobart (see Julian 2004; Eldridge 2008), a community of ethnic Burmese, plus a few Chin families, relocated elsewhere in Tasmania. These are ethnically and linguistically distinct groups for whom religion and different community priorities have made relations between groups uneasy at times. The Karens in Tasmania come from at least six of the nine refugee camps on

the TBB. Although many are from Mae La this is the largest camp (around 100, 000 registered residents), so has separate zones, schools and churches. While relatives often resettle together in small numbers, particularly on family reunion visas, they often arrive as family fragments – a solo parent with teens, or grandparents and one older child, for instance. The group is not drawn from single or pre-existing community. Par Di told me, with some pride, that the UNHCR will relocate Karens with no other connections in Australia to Tasmania. The group is also diverse because even close family members may have been separated while fleeing the Burma army - for example a grandmother and her husband fled to one camp, her daughters and their children to another. Her husband applied to be resettled to Australia but she was reluctant to leave extensive family still in Burma. Once resettled this Pi helped her two daughters (Naw, and *Naw Wah*) to come with their young children - their husbands were both soldiers who had died. Over eight years the family has been reunited with an uncle (adult brother) and two teens, and another grandmother. This one family make up two households of eleven and five people. The daughter *Naw Wah's* larger household includes small children, older teens, parents and grandparents. Of the young adults, one has moved interstate to work in an abattoir, and one is a new bride who follows the matrilocal pattern of village life (see Rajah 2008), often staying overnight at her mother's home. In the smaller household the matrilocal pattern is also evident as Naw, the widowed mother and her young children, have been joined by her frail mother and then brother with his teen children.

Typical household structure is nuclear, but this is not culturally normative – where grandparents live locally and family is larger and contains working adults, grandparents reside with their children and grandchildren in one household. The largest of these is an eleven-person household that grew to thirteen during this study due to a daughters' husband and a new baby. Several Karen parents started their families while young but completed their childbearing at older ages, and the gap perhaps reflects delays caused by war, displacement and the uncertainties of the camps. For example, one mother aged in her 40s who was widowed before relocation to Australia from a Thai refugee camp, has a split family. Two young adult children, and a much younger child make up the original family, and a baby has been born to a new Karen father whom she met and married in Australia. All of the women over the age of 25 are mothers, and there are many more women among the adults and teenagers than men. Over the four years of this research, several older single mothers in the group (plus one widow under 40 with school-aged children) were joined by at least four more single mothers, with several children each (late 2017). There are two older women who live

together (alone) and are still attempting reunion with immediate family members from camps. Re-applications for reunion are common, as family circumstances such as elder-care responsibilities in the camps may alter individual ability to move once approved. Recent family reunions (2016-2018) included further young adult daughters and sons who had stayed behind with a spouse, or nephews and nieces who originally stayed behind to care for aged parents. A few much older, frail family members have also arrived, both among Karen and Anuak refugees who attend the church. The next scene is followed by a discussion of themes, pulling out 'what is going on', but leaving extensive theoretical analysis to the Discussion.

SCENE 3: Karen-speaking service at TFC

Its 11:30 and I sit just behind the Karen youth choir, all jammed together up the front on the left-most row of pews in the chapel. I know what to expect here – it will be loud and the service will be long, and follow a loose pattern more fluid and friendly than a typical church service. Teens are a conspicuous part of the service; one sits behind the drum kit and several are on guitars practicing idly until enough gather to start. Youth take up the front four or five rows of pews on the left near the band, crowding together and socialising. The girls are on the front two rows in front of me, the boys are fewer in number and sit behind me or slouch on the side pew for easy access to the stage and instruments. The assembled stand to sing a rousing song together to electric guitar and piano accompaniment. Key singers with instruments stand behind microphones on the stage, and more singers stand in the pews with a mic in hand. The song blasts from every throat and seems to wake up every cell in my body. The volume is often right up and can rise even further to match the level of celebration. By the second song I am given a song sheet and can sing along if I read intently. People sit down and the vibe is very cosy and casual; families getting together. *Pi* takes to the stage in longyi and socks, folds her hands on the pulpit to pray. *Therah* reads from the Bible through small glasses on his nose. The choir leader stands up, looking about for his fellow singers. They gather unhurriedly on stage, about 12 but with a lot of voice, alto, tenor and bass each apportioned a part but mingling and blending. A slim boy in a black Karen tunic and an older man with a homemade Karen-fabric jacket are taking around the offering bags, and we all put in some coins. *Therah Mu* makes some announcement, talking about the Sunday School. Therah helps her lower the pulpit just off the stage. The children all gather on the stage and sing Jesus loves me in Sgaw, with *Therah Mu* demonstrating the

actions. A couple of boys find they are near the pulpit mic, and do a bit of shouty singing into that, so parents smile and teens giggle and nudge each other. The children wander off the stage but a child of about five is back up onto the stage with a mic, reciting a memory verse. Children in Karen tunics or party dresses are coming up one by one to recite verses, or the 56 books of the Bible. *Therah Mu* speaks again, and begins handing out envelopes to each child: they have attained a certificate or small prize. The congregation don't clap the children, but there are whistles and laughter as one name is announced, and an older lady runs up to also receive an envelope, and pretends to blush and courtesy. Another *Pi* makes an announcement, and speaks from the pulpit, now restored to its place on the stage. To the side, almost all the youth are gathering on the band stage, four deep behind the microphones, and together with *Therah* on the keyboard they sing a hearty song with lots of verses and lots of choruses. The offering bags circulate again. Talent and personality seem to determine who sings – several of the youth have excellent musical ability, and a few are very loud, passionate singers. The youth finish their song, and all approach the lad with the bag to drop in their coins. The boy and man have the bags in front of the pulpit, and *Therah* prays over the money. *Pi* seems to begin the song, but as if prearranged, a spontaneous thank you is sung a Capella. *Therah* reads and speaks from the Bible, and a small book and notes.

As the devotion for the day is read, the offering bags are passed to the ladies near the front, who dig out the coins and notes to count and record totals in a ledger. I try to focus on the talk but only pick up a few nouns in Sgaw. I count over a hundred heads. I see some older girls have made origami with the bulletin for the children near them. Small children play with their parents' hands and the tassels on their clothing; they sleep or are breastfed. The children do not have toys - there are no iPads here, unlike in homes. I see Thera Mu give her twin boys wrapped lollies. People climb the stairs on the side of the stage to access the toilet and return, rather than exit at the back which is the long way around. As boys and girls return via the stairs they duck their heads to walk politely by elders on stage and through the rows with seated elders. Two girls are enjoying the thin velvet pew cushions, making them into a box-shaped fort and popping out of the top like Jack-in-the-box. There are prayers and another spontaneous song, sung soft and low. The service is finished and there is a pause, people lean over the pews to consult with each other and a meeting begins, with different matters of business raised by different ones standing where they are to impart some news about the womens' group, the youth. *Pu* comes up to speak. There are comments and people answer queries. The service and meeting are not yet finished, its 1pm. Sometimes the service goes

until 2pm, depending on who is in attendance. If a pastor is away encouraging other Karens interstate, the service may be shorter. If a special guest is present - Karen pastors visiting from Brisbane, Melbourne, Burma or Thailand, or singing groups from Thailand or Burma - the service has more singing, sermons and offerings. Today some matter of business is being discussed and people in different roles stand to ask or answer questions. I whisper I'm hungry to a young girl sitting with me, and *Mu* confides it's too long – for me. Therah prays again. Suddenly the Karen families are all leaving the chapel without stopping to socialise further. The crowd pulls me outside. People call to each other, yelling and gesturing, mingling around working out who will go with whom and how everyone could possibly get in a car to the next destination. I offer *Mu* and her friends a lift and they accept. Everyone piles into minivans and cars for the house service. Often, I am invited along to Gaw Sha's house. Or someone will ask are you coming? Initially, I hesitated, unsure who was the host this week, or unable to secure these details before everyone left. I realised the detail had been given in Karen in the service and that people assumed my Sgaw was more advanced than reality. I could cobble together enough English and Karen to ask where are you going, but often needed the church directory to match names and addresses. I had more success with searchable contacts in my phone, and once familiar with the houses. Easiest of all was just to give lifts.

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Action, ritual, language and religion: continuity for Karen families

While the patterns of talk and language in this service are still unfamiliar to a non-Karen, body practices can be observed, and faces can be read for feelings (Cartwright 2012: 152, cited in Pink et al 2016: 242). The Karen service provides a welcome gathering point for these Karens. The Karen language and ways are in evidence, and body movements seem freer in the space after the restrictions and sharing of the earlier English-speaking service. Body positionings 'tell' of existing relations across and within groups (see Pink et al 2016: 242-4). Karens sit where they like, and take up the front few rows. The teens stick to the left row of pews, sitting together as a preference and in order to sing together as a choir, accompanied by the band. This space is being used by Karen in desirable or collectively negotiated ways; they relax here with familiar people, their own service structure and use their own language. Those Karen with set roles for this week lead the service and serve in the other ways, and leaders take a clear but not exclusive place at the pulpit. While children do so politely, anyone can climb the stairs to the stage at any time, to access the break room. Time at the front is shared by women and men, older people, and children are invited to speak and

play a role in speaking the scriptures. The stories and exhortations from the Bible are being read and learnt and taught and sung here. The Karen service is a place where home language is expected, used and rewarded; youth can join in a song, children receive recognition. These are signs of belonging, set in a practice framework (Bottomley 1997; Williamson 2015). Behaviour in this religious space is particular, as here, actors blend ethnic and religious belonging to shape a new spatial practice out of fractured and de-territorialised Karen biographies. These actions tend towards tradition and cultural maintenance but are also 'translations' (Bhabha 1993: 309), never a complete reproduction of the past (cited in Julian 2004: 56). But these Karen, have (re)created a locality; through local social networks and religious rituals they have generated a cultural space. These actions operate to reproduce locality, or 'emplace' Karens in a new home setting (see Rangkla 2011; Discussion).

Clothing as comfort and continuity

Karen clothing is a signifier of culture, and is used for celebratory occasions, but is also an everyday object. Unlike many groups who reserve costumes for festivals and ritual use (the Hmong, for example, see Eldridge 2008) these Karen buy and use distinctively patterned cotton clothing - both traditional and machine made - as everyday wear. Selected older men and women are rarely without their longyi, tied in front or tucked to the side respectively. Small boys can be spotted out on the street with friends or on bikes, because of their patterned tunics. A Karen tunic is a rectangle of sturdy cotton, woven with a v-opening in the centre and back of the neckline. The tunic has contrasting coloured embroidery stripes and hems, and loose tassels at the base of the v, or hanging about the midline, and as a fringe on the hem. Sometimes baubles of matching cotton adorn the sleeves, crystal beads are used on the tassels, and some tops are black and decorated with Job's Tears (white oval seeds). The tunic is the most evident garment for both genders, paired with fleecy pants by older people, and with layers underneath and on top by everyone, due to the cool climate. Casual clothing may be worn to formal events for warmth, and odd hats and beanies are used to ward off sickness. Teen boys might pair an immaculate embroidered fashion cap or bleached hair with a Karen tunic over black jeans and street shoes. An unfitted, long dress with the same v-opening front and back, are the traditional outfit for unmarried girls. The youth often wear matching outfits, and several came to church one day in a 'uniform' of matching white cotton dresses. These particular garments were the Australian Karen youth uniform, and so used a rich Australian-flag blue as the contrasting embroidery. *Mu* told me that in Thailand Karens

'always, everyone wear the same (sic)' – that is, matching outfits within gender and cohort groups is normative - but that in Australia 'it doesn't matter, you can wear anything'. Young women have taken to wearing zip-up longyis, or lighter Thai silk versions paired with Western accessories. Karens wear elaborate, tailored or simply newer versions of their clothing on special occasions, plus high heels, and have usually ordered garments ready-made, or tailor-make them themselves. Clothing and fabric are imported from Karens living in Thailand who have set up small industries. At church, married women wear the tunic and longyi in carefully matched colour combinations[55]. The separates are useful as the skirt accommodates girth in pregnancy, and the loose top ease in breastfeeding. At home, out and about and when unwell Karen tunics and longyis are comfortable and familiar, especially for the adults. Cultural and familiar ways are tied to clothing for these Karens. *Naw*, who often wears Western fashions, had a few comforts with her on the day I visited – she had miscarried that day, and held a hot water bottle and had on a bloodstained longyi. Another day, *Pu* emerged from a bath, his wet longyi in a bucket and just a towel tied expertly in front; 'he doesn't trust the [washing] machine', *Pi* remarked. These flexible swapping out of clothing elements and style can be seen as 'translations' or effective communications of cultural codes of meaning (Hall 1997: 10-11). Some unfamiliar cultural components like technology will be avoided, while others are embraced. Thus, Karen clothes can broadcast 'meanings' and display identity, and identity elasticity, but are also simply things that are useful for action (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, cited in Schudson 1983; Thomas 1991, cited in Linnekin 1993).

SCENE 4: Karen house service

Arriving in Gaw Sha's street I drive slowly until I see all the minivans, and a sea of shoes confirms for me which entrance to use. In this case it is the front door which has a small porch. As I open the door the entranceway, which is just the beginning of a short hallway, is crowded with younger people sitting on the floor leaning against the walls or sitting in the gaps left by several bedroom doors. One boy grasps the bottom of the door and squeezes it open against himself to better let me in. We exchange amused hellos. Through a door to my left the room is very crowded with people sitting together on a living room floor. Woven plastic matting and large scraps of

[55] Now a married woman, I have been gifted two bolts of cloth for longyis and three tunics, plus received one tunic for ranking equal-third in the local Karen youth language exams (October 2016).

carpet covers the cheap carpet. Typical of a local rental, the fireplace is boarded over and an electric heater has been added to it, but it isn't on. I do not remove my winter coat but sit quickly just inside the door with my back to the wall, grateful for the padding on the floor. The older women near me continue their conversations or wait in silence. A young Therah is cross-legged behind a Yamaha keyboard, looking through songs sheets and laughing happily with those about him, one sporting a guitar. Mercifully, the teen who invited me over approaches me from the small kitchen - you came! she exclaims. Come and meet my dad. So, I follow her through to meet a small but wiry man who exchanges a solemn handshake with me. I get nods from several others gathered around a small Formica table of prepared food in the corner of the kitchen. An older woman sits on a stack of chairs in the very corner. Her grin shows teeth badly damaged and mouth reddened by a wad of betel quid. Those standing about are focused strongly on preparing quid. They use their fingers to scoop white or pink pastes from a jars and smear leaves with it, folding and chewing intently. The rest of the kitchen is bare of furniture but a Thai broom leans against a large bag of rice by one wall. There are warm smells of rice and curries in here but my feet freeze through my thin socks. I give the girl a bag of broccolini and when queried about its use for lunch I apologise, saying it is for you to cook later. I return to my seat as the service looks set to begin.

They begin with a long prayer in S'gaw and Therah plays the keyboard for a few songs. All sing together, seated around the floor of the home on mats and in the kitchen and the corridor. I am glad to be on the floor with a mat and in a corner. Usually when I visit Karens make space for me conspicuously, gesturing and pulling me to sit further from the door and up on a couch with other honoured guests, such as the occasional regular church person, and the visiting pastors. Sometimes I had good conversations here, as there was more English among these leader types, but this was a bit embarrassing and isolated me from other friendly people and the more anonymous floor. Very few of those gathered ever have the *Lee saw hs'gee* with them but today I can see iPads being used. These 'personal' devices make an odd sight stacked as a communal resource on the floor. The iPads are distributed evenly around to small groups and clusters, except one is pressed on me, and those around don't try to share it. It is open to a songbook in Sgaw, so I read slowly and sing along quiet guesses at the words. I expect this home service to follow a reasonably set format of songs, prayers, and items sung by the choir, and the Sunday school. The adults' choir slowly gather to stand in the centre of the room, and Par Di hands around photocopied song sheets in Sgaw. He sounds a note and the choir begin to harmonise but the group soon stops at a word from him, and start talking animatedly. They are practicing a song, and so have stopped to work on some detail,

individuals singing a few bars to experiment, uninhibited by the onlookers. They begin to sing again from the top, alto, tenor and baritone voices entwining around each other and making my hair stand on end. The song finishes and Par collects the song sheets carefully. Then Therah reads from small, tattered book written in Sgaw, and the devotion is explained at length. The newcomer teens from this morning are here, still sitting close but looking less wide-eyed here. Two small girls come over to squirm on my knees as I sit there and I do their hair, grateful because it is very cold. The youth loll about in the hall and listen tiredly, tease each other and the small children gently. Next the children gather willingly in the centre of the room, but jostle for position, making light of the awkward, crowded space. *Pi* stands with them, and leads them in a surprisingly loud song, with actions. We are all more awake now. There is another sharing section, and more prayers are prayed, and then an offering is taken up during a song. For some reason, today I recognise and get some meaning out of the end of the service. A list of some kind is being read out and I recognise names and roles – Mu Guah to cook, Pa Di to read - a list of tasks and responsibilities has been allocated to individuals for the next meeting. Now, a solemn grace is said among a quiet of anticipation and then movement and bustling ensues. I shuffle back further against my wall and a pink flannelette sheet is laid across the centre of the floor area.

A meal of plain rice, fried chicken or fried fish pieces, large yellow pickled bamboo cores and clear fish broths, curried meat dishes plus chili/fish paste and steamed vegetables is laid out using a series of bowls to repeat the dishes. Bowls are a mix of cheap melamine, steel and ceramic, some of the bowls holding rice are like salad bowls from a commercial kitchen. One of these is taken up by a young man for eating from. His bowl could easily contain three or four cups of rice. A plate of hot rice is presented to each guest and we are urged to eat and try the food. The first step for older people is to take the large spoon from a broth and sup several times on the liquid. The spoons are replaced in the dishes, so I spoon untouched broth over my rice. Food is being taken and eaten with the right hand, well-kneaded together with a dark red chili-fish paste. People taste a few portions of plain rice first, before mixing it with the chili paste, taking small pieces of meat in alternative mouthfuls, and greens are eaten by pulling soft leaves from woody stalks. The greens are wild turnip, a weed-like broccoli gone to flower, and delicious. At less formal gatherings I have seen leftover plants served cold, directly from a plastic shopping bag. People eat in shifts – they take turns to sit and eat due to a lack of floor space. This adds greatly to my ability to socialise, and to theirs.

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SCENE 5: Karen house party (2016)

I arrive early and entertain the children. The girls crowd about me and a little fellow is there focused on eating fried noodles from the packet. His snack looks to have chili powder on it and the other kids steal from him, showing off a bit. We have a push-up competition to work off energy and I ask them a few questions about the Saturday School, who goes and what they do. A huge table on one side is spread with giant lidded bowls of savouries. There is another low table with an elegant blue birthday cake with three tiers, candles and a '23'-shaped sparkler alongside a pavlova and a tower of sparkly blue cupcakes with icing decals. The birthday girl sits quite formally behind the low table of cakes, but on the floor so only her head and shoulders are visible. She wears a sizeable tiara and a blue silk gown. Behind her some leaders take a seat on dining chairs arranged around the wall, little *Therah* sits cross-legged but serious and upright on his vinyl chair. The host, glamorous Mu Guah is squashed in with all of us seated on the floor, but begins to point out the other empty chairs behind her daughter. *Pi* gets in on it, gesturing to her husband, squashed onto an easy chair with another man, and to myself. *Pi* joins the row of leaders and Naw Wah also takes a chair, gesturing to me, but I shake my head, miming with my iPad that I'll take photos from here. There is an opening prayer, and a thank-you song, sung unaccompanied, and a short announcement. Each time, the singers or speakers stand where they are among the crush. The kids make their way to the middle of the group and sing with gusto and actions. *Therah* gives an address from 1 Thessalonians 5, where Paul gives exhortations about Christian community being one of peace, encouragement, love, patience and supporting each other. People relax, close their eyes, rest their foreheads on their knees. Therah announces something and as usual makes everyone laugh, then he prays, eyes squashed together. The young people gather as a choir to sing, and there is a duet sung by Jaw and Naw who are sweethearts and have fabulous voices. It's pretty clear when the formal proceedings are over, and it's time to eat.

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Religious resettler place-making: doing church

These scenes show resettler action taking place outside of local shared space, in intimate and familiar family spaces. Just as religious rituals formed a backbone for meaningful multicultural encounters, they play a role in this domestic domain to provide a locality, a gathering point and place for newcomers and established Karens. Through the action here,

familiar routines, ethnic culture and language continues in a safe space located within the less familiar social context. Doing church and having other domestic gatherings creates not only a party atmosphere but an evidently familiar organisational structure. Doing church provides a space for cultural ways, for Sgaw, and for socialising with likeminded others. Therah Mu would often lament to me that the children 'don't listen' and do not know Sgaw. So, the gatherings are important to keep children's language as they grow up through Australian school systems (see below). Doing church, and hosting birthday parties, provides not only continuity of action but of station: the services and parties need singers and leaders and cooks and attendees. Elders and teachers *(Therah/ Therah mu)* are equally women and men, although there are more older women who take these roles, possibly due to the features of resettlement among Tasmanian migrants (high proportions of family reunion visas, meaning more Karen women without spouses). One young man is also a Sunday school teacher, the choir leader is a man and two other men act in key leadership roles. Among the Tasmanian Karen women occupy the role of church secretary, treasurer, youth and womens' group leader, and are Sunday school teachers. Women run the Saturday school which incorporates prayers and songs.

Place-making and language inclusion

Generally, Karens who attend Sunday School (in English or Sgaw) or the Saturday (Sgaw) School, Technical college English-classes, and who work have better literacy in either language, so a lack of engagement with institutions leads to linguistic marginalisation for these Karens. For instance, occasional attendance at any of the church services is particularly correlated with low English levels or uptake for young men. These Karens do experience linguistic marginalisation – that is, they lack opportunities to interact frequently with English and English speakers outside formal education settings. At-home mothers, especially single mothers seem particularly linguistically isolated also. Regular English-speaking visitors and friends, or work colleagues with whom they have friendly exchanges seem critical to developing confidence and coherence even exclusive of formal education. Windle and Miller (2012) underscore this need for practice. For example, a *Jaw* I will call Gaw Sha arrived in Tasmania illiterate in Sgaw and had no education prior to living in a refugee camp. He is one of the better English speakers as he is long-settled, is easy-going and willing, and has secured factory work. His work involves interacting with other employees and checking packaging labels. The work requires him to speak and read English, plus he takes regular fishing trips with local colleagues that keep him talking. Gaw Sha has not only become more competent in

English, however, as busy Therah continues to teach literacy and has also taught Gaw Sha to read Sgaw.

The informal economies of place-making

Many informal Karen enterprises are carried on outside the religious domain, however, that mirror the exchanges and informal economies of village and camp life. This person-to-person trade in goods, unlike the trade in language and education, are monetary exchanges. Karens have needs and tastes that Tasmania is unable to supply, but certain Karens can obtain these through informal and business networks. One Pi has an informal shop, selling imported betel, Thai make-up and dried fish products directly to Karens from boxes in her loungeroom. Another Pi sells flowers and vegetables like red corn and finger eggplant from her extensive backyard gardens. Others import boxes of Karen tunics from Karen makers based in Thailand. Karen youth access sports jackets and tee-shirts for their youth groups and annual camp gatherings, printed in Thailand with logos and Sgaw script. One Naw is an excellent seamstress and has made wedding outfits, longyis and even cleverly covered shoes with Karen fabrics. Within a few years of arriving, a community 'cohesion' grant was awarded to Karen families to fund their engagement in a local community garden plot - complete with rooster and hens. A single chicken, kept under Pi's first home, a block of rentals, caused consternation but provided the impetus for the grant. The process was facilitated by Mrs I from TFC, with the local MRC. By the time of this study the garden was doing a slow trade in eggs and fresh meat, but the garden was difficult for one Pi to manage. She would walk hours in all-weather to tend and collect; often the chickens had no food. By 2018 Pi was older, part of a homeowner family and had a large garden; she gave up the community plot, and Karens quickly ate up all the chickens. Pi purchased several fat laying hens for her backyard but regrets there can be no rooster in a neighbourhood – supermarket meat is not fresh, she says. These 'place making' practices are actions which creatively open 'spaces' and opportunities for familiar ways (Smith, Light and Roberts 1998: 7, cited in Roster et al 2016: 7). And these actions are not just about 'doing' identity work but are oriented towards practical purposes and social relations (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, cited in Schudson 1983).

SCENE 6: English-language lessons (exchange)

I drive down through the city and into the industrial outskirts, passing paint places and rug shops and horse and pet suppliers and then garish takeaway places before the road is lined with houses. The scrubby gardens and yellow weatherboards, pale tin rooves and car makes and models confirm this suburb as renters and modest home-owners. I pull over into the front yard of Naw's place, beside their minivan. The front garden is a riot of gerberas and geraniums and alstroemerias, and little Paw Kwa is waiting for me on the balcony with no pants on. Hello, I say how are you, and he runs inside. No, no, no, says dad inside, catching him by the couch and putting him in pants. Sorry for that, dad says. No worries, I say, how are you. Good thank you, he says, stretching out the 'good' melodiously and for emphasis. I take a seat near the door with little Paw who is absorbed in an iPad game. He tells me about the food and weapons he has collected. Hello Rebekah! says Pi coming in from the backyard, sweating from her exertions. Her daughter Naw emerges into the kitchen and says hello, hugs me and goes straight to the cabinet for her books. Pu emerges from the garden too, stooped but smiling hugely, saying hello and joining Pi on the couch. Naw comes and sits with me on the floor at a low table. I sort through the pages to the current lesson, a review. I decide to do a mix of written and verbal review. Naw calls to her daughter in the kitchen, fetch Therah Mu a drink. We begin the lesson with a context and key word 'where'. I recap the Sgaw for here, there, and the question where, using my Sgaw index cards and the Say it in Karen Sgaw lesson plan. Paw Mu places a beer mug of green tea near me, thank you I say, involving her in the lesson. Where are you going tomorrow? I recap from last week. She hesitates. Are you going to Technical College? I ask. Yes, she replies. Where are you going on Sunday? I ask. Church, she replies. I am going in church, her mother replies, mock-formal and laughing. I am going… I prompt. I am going *to* church Pi responds. Oh, to church *neh*, to church *ner g'deh tha roh, ah?* (you're going to church?) - Naw turns to dialogue with her mother. We are warming up in Karenglish so I pantomime being on the phone and ask, *ke ee, ner oh pe leh*? and follow with the English; now, where are you? Naw responds she is at home. I say yes, then am emphatic and gesture, you are there. She laughs and gestures, yes, I am here… in my house. Yes, in your house, at your home I recap the lesson. Where are your children, I say, and we work together on locating Kwa outside, Mu in the kitchen and older son Paw Kwa in Perth. I have Naw write out each of the questions and responses in English. Then I compose several other sentences, writing them carefully in her fat exercise book. I place down more questions to locate people, the toilet, and places like the supermarket,

adding questions about the distance to walk or drive there. I sip tepid tea and work with Naw and Pi to understand the English questions and have Naw write out the Sgaw underneath each one. There is some discussion among them about the Sgaw. But old Pu has hung his head and sleeps. Over an hour has passed and Paw Kwa is restless, wanting mum's attention. A song, I say, to finish. Do you know *Where is thumbkin*? I direct the song to Paw as it is a silly nursery one. Where is thumbkin, I say, showing him how to wiggle his thumb and put out each finger in turn. The song repeatedly asks where is thumbkin, index, middle-man, ring-man and little man, and the opposite fingers bow and say here I am, and how are you. Paw seems shyer than the adults about the song, who get into it once they learn. I am asked to write out the song, so that is a win, and I add it to the back of the book with some others. Thank you Naw says, smiling at her son's happiness, and closing the books to signal the end of the lesson. She goes to the kitchen and returns with a bowl of nuts for me. I nibble as Pi asks me about access to something on the iPad. We work together to find the instruction booklet for provisional drivers and study the first few pages. Naw calls to her mother and asks me to eat rice. I show Pi how to save and bookmark the booklet for access offline and join Naw at the kitchen table. Naw has placed out a plate of rice each, bowls of cooked greens, chili paste, a yellow potato curry, a fish broth and fried fish pieces. Naw takes a breath and folds her hands, saying a grace, praying with the long vowel sounds of Sgaw. We say amen and taste the rice. Naw kneads chili paste into rice with her fingertips and I spoon up flavours and pick fish pieces and greens. Paw Mu approaches with a large bowl of pineapple chunks, and Pi grabs a piece on her way back out the door. Jaw makes me another hot tea, and Paw Kwa plays peek-a-boo with me around the counter. After the meal they let me wash my plate, and I leave to calls of *ta blu* thank you Rebekah and *ti lo tha* see you soon.

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Language exchange as relational and reciprocal

This scene shows how relationships developed around a regular language-lesson. The lesson becomes a vehicle for regular visits and relations, but also builds up cultural vocabularies alongside English and Karen. The act of entering a home and speaking desirable languages was polite, showed care and was of practical benefit to the actual lessons, while personal examples made the learning relevant to Naw. Using a learners' first language can leverage prior knowledge and make lessons more meaningful (Windle and Miller 2012) but using some Sgaw provided an opportunity for repeated but relaxed interactions in the target language, English. This domestic scene shows English competence and use that is demonstrative of broader patterns among these Karens. For example, the literacy of Karen

children in primary school is fair to good, depending on age and years in schooling, and they are likely to speak some English at home even in an otherwise English-free family. For example, Paw Kwa might exclaim 'I hurt my foot' or respond to his iPad in English – most Karen school children converse at about age-appropriate level. Small children (including those born in Australia), however, do not use English this way, and are strikingly less verbal than Australian toddlers but appear to catch up quickly upon entering school. Speaking to Paw Mu, however, I can see that high school completion (that is, not subsequent to primary schooling in Australia) has not conferred confident English communication on Karen youth (see Windle and Miller 2012). English competence at each life stage has correlates with primary school attendance, and TAFE, but Karen young adults can be shy with English and embarrassment can cause further withdrawal from social or learning settings (see Windle and Miller 2012). While some do not succeed, and some drop out, there do not appear to be great levels of discouragement among many of these Karens. Mr P told me that a small number of youth are keen and dedicated participants in his Boys Brigade, for instance, but that they do struggle to answer basic biographic questions on forms and to express themselves in writing, needing prompts and assistance[56]. Thus, the language I brought in to this home was warmly welcomed, and not only assisted the whole family to navigate grammar, but social services and technology. The family recognised the commodities I brought into their home by suppling food and care, plus teaching me Sgaw in turn. Just as a socio-religious spaces are constituted by local action, so interactional spaces can be created by home-making efforts and exchange.

Next, a scene from a house visit fills in the picture around the friendship and ally behaviours of this study and gives a more intimate glimpse of these Karen lives. A visit to a Karen home is always dependent on the size and activity of the household, so the next scene differs from many in that I was not there to teach English but was a well-known visitor, small children were not present, and the interaction relied on verbal navigations using English and Karen. What is common in this scene to most interactions with Karen people is the reciprocal exchanges, Karen hospitality and the closeness of non-related Karens.

[56] Windle and Miller (2012) note that there is a need for learners to produce written expression, but this is an underutilised pedagogical tool in ESL teaching. Windle and Miller (2012) note that ESL teaching emphasises teacher-centred activity and discussion, which is less helpful for building autonomy in those learning English.

SCENE 7: Karen house visits (2018)

I had confirmed our Karen lesson the Sunday prior, so biked to Therah's house, arriving hot but earlier than planned. All was deserted there as it was school holidays, but his wife and daughters had returned from Thailand. I wait ten minutes on the cool of the porch before phoning him. He was a few streets down, visiting – I didn't recognise the street name, so I proposed I wait for him a few houses up. I propped the bike next to the neat flower garden as Naw's sister Bu Tee answered the door. Her pregnancy was showing now, so I worried she'd be ashamed but she wasn't worried, and Naw just handed me iced water. I sat on one of the couches which was covered by a sheet. The shabby benches and floor were completely empty of objects and the single sink spotless. We discussed the girls' new bejewelled mobile phone covers, and they told me about Bu's latest scan when I asked. I'd heard about her condition from her mother last time I was here, mostly through Naw, with her mother narrating pantomimed shame – covering her eyes and looking to heaven. We had discussed the marriage issue, and I clarified that while the legal age is 18, if parents approve Australian courts allow marriage from age 16. Then Mu Guah came in from her phone call, slim and fit from smoking and gardening, and kept up a monologue of Sgaw while she put out a bowl of snacks, and poured me a hot, sweet coffee. I was navigating the drinks when Therah arrived at the back door. He looked tanned and relaxed and came directly inside, taking off his shoes and *htuh* (Karen shoulder bag) and taking my hand, a nod and smile with his greeting to the others. He took a seat but soon had to navigate Mu's insistent hospitality by helping himself to a drink, so she had to satisfy herself reheating some sausages for us while we made small talk in English. Mu said she understands, but cannot speak English, saying 'understand many thing, but not [to be] talking'. I compared myself to her, saying I can speak some Sgaw, but cannot understand anything (Sgaw being spoken). Mu fussed over my bag, so I moved it outside with my shoes. It had been the only object in the kitchen-dining area apart from the furniture. Mu insisted I move to a chair near the table, so I sat near the snacks and drinks while she busied herself with 'Karen chocolate' (betel nut)[57]. She took some hard crumbs of the nutmeg-sized treat to suck on as she spoke about her phone call. *Therah* sat cross legged on his kitchen chair eating a sausage, and Mu's son wandered in with an ice cream, grinning under his earphones. I didn't understand much of Mu's explanation

[57] For more on the social significance of chewing areca nut (betel nut) and areca leaf smeared with lime paste (quid) among 'Burmese' refugees see Winstock (2002, cited in Ferber et al 2013).

beyond that there are three children, two of them boys so I say oh, three children, two boys one girl, and Mu confirms that is so. *Therah* reminds me she had two husbands, one died, one ran away. *Therah* takes another sausage and chats with the girls, it seems Bu's state was no secret between them. The boy and Naw have earphones in, so Naw is talking while listening in on other Karens socialising somewhere, and I ask the boy about his favourite topics - friends and school. I was mostly done with the coffee when *Therah* asked if I liked Birdy (branded mix of instant coffee, milk and sugar) - I admitted 'sometimes'- he knows I don't like sweet, so maybe he's trying to save me. I say I have coffee only black, and joke that Mu tries to make me fat. They agree '[fat] is better'. I ask Naw about her L-plates – she needs more practice. I suggest if *Therah* is not there when I visit, and I come with the car, I could take her driving. We wind up our drinks and Therah takes a big slice of Mu's nut and announces in Sgaw its time to go. Mu questions me in Sgaw and I hesitate, rescued by *Therah* who smiles 'you can say *meh* (yes)' – I try it, and clarify *ya g'lair Therah hi ler* (I will be going to teachers' house) – we understand each other.

Therah fetches his paperwork and I join him cross-legged on his kitchen-dining floor. Here the floor space is occupied by a rumpled bed, baskets of betel nut things and spit buckets, the walls hold poster-sized family photos, and the kitchen counters are crammed with camping and cooking equipment and papers. I read the form and summarise, he works the slice of nut with his teeth and nods, and we negotiate how we will manage to meet each requirement of the form. Policy ID numbers he will do with Mrs. H tonight, she has them on her computer; a medical check he needs to book with his GP this week; certificates he needs to find; and two essays he will draft with his Karen pastor-friend in English and have me check on Thursday. We arrange a meet-up for this, and he is pleased. He asks me to pray for him. I fold my hands and praise God first, and I thank Him for *Therah's* work so far supporting and teaching his people and I pray for his application to be a success so he can continue to grow and keep working as a pastor. Therah thanks me, and asks me do you like cherry? I do, so he fills my little bag to capacity with plum-sized fruit from a harvesting box – 'my friends give me [these]', he explains. I've put on my helmet and bag by the time I reach the front door to shake hands goodbye. He smiles and as our hands meet our shoulders also touch in a light hug. Years before my linguist friend told me sternly 'the Burmese don't hug'. So, it must be the betel and I too feel the euphoria all the way home.

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Going to see these Karen

In this scene the lifestyle and household habits common in the villages and refugee camps is in evidence – clear floor spaces and an utter lack of storage furniture (see Appendix D). In several other households, however, frugal housekeeping is not so spartan, and free or cheap goods have begun to fill homes, countertops, floor spaces, and occasionally storage units. As a lack of objects is common in the developing world, the objects in these houses are often difficult for householders to locate, clean and store. Storage is done in particular ways. Karens will use a kitchen drawer or cupboard to store prepared bowls of food, while the fridge only contains drinks. On the rare occasion homes have built-in storage, papers will be placed inside, and papers fill wardrobe drawers. Paper and mail cause consternation as householders are unable to read, nor sort the important from junk mail. Mrs H explained that early on, piles of this mail would be kept for them to examine and explain. This is a frivolous sample of graver exclusions from civic life. As Amin explains, public culture and action in contemporary Australian society is 'plural and distributed' - not limited to 'sites' such as English-language schools, workplaces and societies but also 'circuits of flow… not reducible to the urban' such as books, news and popular medias (see Amin 2008: 6). I finished paperwork with Therah one day, and he offered me 'veggies', as if it was the only essential task that remained. He proceeded to retrieve market quality produce from every corner of the house. Returning from outside he had three of the largest boc choy I'd ever seen. He got some squash from the sink, parsley from a plastic bag, English spinach from inside a cupboard, radishes from under a chair in the lounge room, and spring onions and coriander out of a wide fold of cloth on the floor near the front door. While his storage methods were startling, the veg was a signifier of relations: Therah was mobilising skills and supplies from his community network to establish an alternative economy and communicative practice.

In this research there are strong signs that friendship with non-Karens including myself constitute exchange relations, and contribute resources and capitals to the Karens, who seek to formalise such relations, for example by giving me the title of Therah Mu. Karens also seek to extend and deepen their local and transnational networks. Frequent visits interstate, and invitations not only to events, but to meet visiting pastors and travel overseas to camps exemplify this action. I was also invited along to visit family and churches in Burma, and even to a fledgling university set up in a rebel-held area. These actions and exchanges can be characterised by reference to 'emplacement work', and bonding and bridging capitals, in the Discussion, next.

Ch 6 Discussion: Of resettling with religious practices and places

> The place where structure, interaction, and culture come together concretely is in the small group… The small group [is the] window into social order (Fine 2003: 44).

While the findings aimed for thick description, this chapter aims for analysis and comparison, using theory to explain and expand the data. The writing is reflexive and contextualises the findings in the light of prior research, it discusses Karen lives and resettlement as one phase that sits within broader socio-historical processes. Sociological theory of the middle range will be used to provide an analytical discussion of resettling action and interaction patterns in terms of inclusion, exclusion, transversal work and capitals. This ethnography uses theory from micro-sociology rather than anthropology, and empirical (substantive) findings around resettler processes, practices and interactions. This chapter concludes with a reflexive (methodological) section, and a detailed consideration of the contributions of this study.

After a decade of Karen resettlement including sharing the space of the chapel, there are two sets of signs. The first is a set of indicators (Part 1) are findings about the multicultural interactions in the chapel space. These demonstrate how religious belonging and civic participation happen, but do not constitute social inclusion. The second set (Part 2) are findings about the actions and attachment of these Karens to this space, that show how religious and ethnic belonging work constitutes 'place making'. Along with physical space and practical support, the emotional support structure of the community, especially the community of faith, has helped the Tasmanian Karen better deal with their foreign context (see Counted 2016). These interactions involve transversal work and outward gestures of inclusion. The physical space, and practices within it, however, are not free of exclusions so these are addressed first below. Happily, much of the action in and around this space can be variously characterised as 'doing recognition' (Wise 2009) which contributes to the creation of a convivial or micro-economic arena (Part 2). As church and church spaces are central for Karen place-making, 'doing resettling' not only adds action within this arena and operates to build network capitals, there are evidences for resettler resourcefulness outside of this space. These actions and intentions show community solvency to operate in the moral economy, and the productive capacities of belonging-work as community-capital raising.

Part 1: Socio-religious spaces of encounter

> …openness to cultural diversity plays an important role in regional towns ability to retain humanitarian migrants, [but] this alone cannot compensate for a lack of opportunities (Schech 2014: 601).

Spaces of encounter: towards inclusion

In terms of the first set of signs around multicultural interaction, in the English-speaking space signs are subtle, embodied, and also arise from location-bound ephemeral practices and broader hegemonic discourses. There are inclusions and gesture that welcome and recognise the Karens in this space, but nothing that confers ownership, allows control over the space, and no signs of Karen presence remain once the people leave the building. So, in terms of the latter, the hegemonic group define and delimit this space (see Cresswell 2014; Bottomley 1997). The cultural group that has traditionally occupied the space can override or render invisible the Other, their culture and language. Thus, the space allows for belonging and participation, but limits ownership and deeper levels of inclusion. van der Meulen's (2012) case study of a Dutch-African congregation's religious, material and relational resources similarly found that these capitals operated to both enable and limit civic engagement. In this study, just as with van der Meulen (2012), leadership and language capacities meant that the dominant language group were able to exert more control over buildings, meetings and other proceedings than the African members. Schech's (2014: 601) case study expands on this microstructural imbalance to conclude that friendly locals 'cannot compensate for a lack of opportunities'. Thus, suburban church networks are positive sources of social capital, but civic engagement in church, like other social spaces, is 'contested' (van der Meulen 2012). For instance, for Karens, the chapel space can be understood as both 'front stage' during the 10am service, where Karens must 'behave' to expectations, and 'backstage' during the Karen service, as people can be themselves (Goffman 1959). So, when Karens are the 'minority' (despite being the larger group) they must work to manage impressions of their (non-homogenous) culture, while still learning to decode the conventions of a foreign culture. But when Karens have the space 'to themselves' their manner is dramatically more relaxed as the 'impression management' (Goffman 1956) or 'identity work' is with cultural insiders. Conversely, when a single outsider observes the Karen services in the chapel or at home, they must expect to see Karens behaving 'backstage', and within the conventions of their own interpretations of their own (emplaced) culture. For instance, Karens frequently affirmed how

they and I were known to each other ‘off stage’ (Goffman 1959). After a long Sunday of services and at the 4pm meal Pi exclaimed to me ‘Rebekah, you know my people, you eat together [with] my people, you speak [with] my people’ (March 2018). In these micro publics, cross-cultural encounters are significant, but ‘habits of practice’ such as gestures, exchange and regular meeting and eating together are moves towards deeper engagement (see Amin 2002: 976, cited in Wise 2009: 40; Amin 2008).

Yet in the space of the chapel co-presence makes communication and interpretation possible, positive, and based in practice. So, while cultural and linguistic differences operate to compress the space available for the Other, shared practices open possibilities for ‘translation’ and inclusion (see Hall 1997: 2-11). In this space religious rituals are shared organisational practices thus meaningful and mutually comprehensible (see Hodge 199: 59ff). Recognition is evident in embodied practice, while inclusion, a space to speak - to be given ‘the floor’ as it were, is at present, partial. During formal proceedings, Karen people are afforded small but significant participations, while their language occupies only strictly demarked space, particularly from up front - within ‘platform activity’ (Goffman 1983). Karen language has more ‘room’ or presence in informal interactions but can take a less comprehensible but more personally meaningful form communication. For example, face-to-face conversation can – or must - incorporate non-verbal signals, two-way negotiation of meaning, and questions, the esoteric, and the amusing. Co-presence can communicate value. For instance, Karen are enthusiastic about visitors at their services, and pleased when friends attend weddings and birthdays. Findings presented here show that informal interaction has a different role to play, and a different feel to formal encounters. Reports from a comparable Karen community in Bendigo show that integration for this group is good: Karens have an ‘impressive’ array of supports and engagements, but informal (social) interaction is still limited (Welding and Nunn 2016). Wilding and Nunn (2016: 19) note that informal relations often emerge from voluntary and service-provider relations, but are an important way to ‘build friendships, and can also uncover needs in the Karen communities that are invisible in formal support settings’. While the political outcomes of these associations are admittedly modest, networks and communal outcomes have, however, been generated by co-presence (see Amin 2008). These arise from transversal ‘work’ and relations, discussed next.

Ethics of care, transversal work and practices

This study has described how an ethic of care operated to support Karens during their early arrival stages, but also how cross-cultural friendships and relations have been maintained. Most of these relationships were with consistent, self-appointed 'Karen community helpers' – people who Wise and Velayutham (2009; see Wise 2009; Back and Sinha 2016) would call transversal enablers. These people have a diverse set of 'transversal practices' (Wise 2009:21), such as sharing food, giving lifts and a level of language assistance, and helping navigate local networks and bureaucracy. To use Wise's (2009) language, these individuals make 'transversal crossings', that is, they habitually enter cross-cultural situations and foster cross-cultural relationships (see Back and Sinha 2016). This may mean they often work to arrange or attend cross-cultural gatherings, they may often act as conduits for information-sharing between different groups, and they forge relationships across cultural difference. This 'work' can include small gestures such as simply caring; visiting, saying hello in a person's language, being considerate of cultural norms, learning greetings and remembering important festivals (Wise 2009: 21ff; Back and Sinha 2016).

It is important to note, however, that convivial sociality is two-way and reciprocal. Reciprocity and contribution are at the heart of relationships (see Mauss 1925, cited in Douglas and Wildavsky 1982). Thus, these are not cold transactions that must somehow be repaid or matched, but anticipate reciprocity and meaningful connection and contribution (Wise 2009; see Mauss 1925 cited in Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Back and Sinha 2016). For instance, Back and Sinha's (2016) ethnography demonstrated the 'convivial capacity' or home-making capabilities of young migrants in London. A recognition of convivial capacities is a recognition of the everyday resources even marginalised groups have to create space despite structural constraints such as racism (Back and Sinha 2016). Thus, conviviality and transversal work are two-way forms of association, sociality and even solidarity, not simply unidirectional 'help' or 'welcome' from local populations to newer residents.

In all of my encounters, these Karen appear to carefully balance reciprocal relations, using gifts of clothing, fruit or a shared meal to 'even out' the interaction, and these too symbolise and cement relationships (see Sennett 2003, cited in Wise 2009: 31). It is important to note that several relationships are not or are no longer characterised by helping but by friendship, and centre on shared family meals, garden and tree work, fishing trips or language exchange. These are often built around or build on the skills and interests of Karens. In this way, Karens must also be seen as transversal workers. Transversal work is not only 'us' helping and

sharing ‘our’ space but ‘them’ contributing and participating faithfully - even to attend church in English. Transversals are not only *me* participating and teaching English, but *Therah* giving out lettuces and Sgaw lessons every week – these are the concrete everyday practices missing from the philosophical ideal of ‘recognition’ – this is *doing* recognition (Wise 2009: 35). Thus, snacks and cherries and Karen tunics and rice and lessons are not only things but solid evidence of a shared moment, mutuality, and recognition (see Reflexive conclusion). This flow of artefacts has been described as a post-colonial garage sale, where exchanges are not only ‘commodities’ but carry meaning- or relation-signifying ‘gifts’ (Mauss 1925, cited in Douglas and Wildavsky 1982) or simply as practical, useful objects (Thomas 1991, cited in Linnekin 1993). Karens are making overtures and efforts alongside key ‘Karen community helpers’, so a deeper look at Karen place-making, informal interactions and capitals, are in the next section.

Part 2: *These* Karens, in *this* stage and *this* space.

> [Pwo] Karen refugees draw upon familiar cultural schema to create a sense of place, security and belonging in a new home [in Mae Sot, Thailand] …the displaced Karen’s religious practices exemplify the ‘(re) production of locality’ in a spatially extended mode. The religious life of these Karen refugees entails a new beginning and search for emplacement (Rangkla 2013:10).

These Karens

These second set of actions are to do with these resettler Karens ‘place making’ at this stage in their settlement. These Karen are resettlers, that is, they are a first generation of refugee-background in the first ten years of resettlement. These Karens are doing resettlement in a local context, and this context shapes their resources and networks. These Karens are in a busy stage and have pragmatic imperatives that should figure in accountings of resettlement ‘success’. This stage and setting greatly impacts their ‘identity work’, and connections to Burma and being Karen. These resettlers are also mostly Christian, and thus religious rituals and faith behaviour shapes their priorities and resettlement action and has impacted their belonging and emplacement ‘work’. The findings about this group of Karens echo reports from regions around Australia and rural Karens in Georgia, USA, but differ from findings about a Burmese diaspora in New Zealand (see Gilhooly and Lee 2017 and Cho 2011 respectively). Like these studies, local networks of Karen and other people-resources are key to capital-raising for this emerging community of resettlers. The studies highlight how the

term Karen is not singular but ‘a diverse range of linguistic, religious and political groups’ (Cho 2011), with potential for greater divergence and greater ‘diaspora consciousness’ in resettlement.

Karen identity and the resettler stage

Unlike findings that ‘national identity is a particularly strong identity among migrants’ (Burrell 2006: 186), these Tasmanian Karen seem to hold no such nationalistic conceptions in public or private. While Karen identities are politicised in Burma (Harriden 2002, cited in Gilhooly and Lee 2017), and Karen identity (Karen-Australian identity) seem politicised at Brisbane Karen events (see Bird et al 2016; Background Part 3) no such evidence emerged in this study. For example, while family photos are ubiquitous, these Karen do not adorn their walls with photographs of iconic leaders from the resistance. Tasmania Karens may have the stylised red and blue rays of the sun (from the Karen national flag), or the Karen drums as a mobile phone cover or badge attached to clothing, but while I have been to over a dozen homes and numerous events I have not seen the Karen flag displayed there. It seems Burma - Karen State specifically - is not a location of loyalty or identity but a place where family and friends are located. Tragedies of the past and the wider political situation in Burma were not a feature of conversations in this ethnography - although the situation in Burma and past events were mentioned and evidently powerful memories of what is a continued influence on the lives of family and connections. For instance, one couple had all their hand-reared cattle taken by the Burma army, one man was tortured simply for being the village leader, and sons and fathers died in the jungle because they became soldiers to defend their people. Recently (2018), a Karen Pastor on the TBB sent out a prayer request on social media, asking friends to pray for a young father, captured as a child soldier by the army. These ‘personal-political’ issues are a past chapter, and sill emerge as a thread in these Karen lives. However, unlike Cho’s (2011) finding that the Burmese diaspora in Auckland dream of return and fear forgetting their past places and people, these Karen are focused on the here and now (see Wilding and Nunn 2016). It is not that Karen identity is not salient to these Karen, nor are transnational ties lacking. Quite the opposite, as the scenes show, this group live very ‘Karen’ lives, speaking and eating in way very close to prior lives. These Karens have expressed a sense of loss about language and homeland-with-family-and-farm. But unlike the Auckland diaspora the local network is more central than the internet to keeping up with people, and own-language news and events (Cho 2011; see Chapter 6). And while these Karens do actively re-forge social networks disrupted by displacement via frequent travel, Karen

organisational capacities, mobile technology, and social networking sites, this is not the primary way to keep in touch with language - church-going and education is, in the local setting. The local has perhaps become more salient for these Karen than the diaspora in Auckland as New Zealand feels safe but not yet like home (Cho 2011). The local life in New Zealand is shaped by Karens sharing suffering (including stories, or news online) and non-Burmese expressions of sympathy with human rights victims; each a political act (Cho 2011). Yet, for the Tasmania Karen, it seems their history is not now what I call 'speakably salient', certainly not for outsiders, just as Gans (1979) found with holocaust survivors in the first generation of Jews in America. This demonstrates the malleable and fragmentary nature of Karen identity (see Bottomley 1997: 43), gives evidence for diversity in community bonding processes (Leonard 2004; see also Santoro and Wilkinson 2013), and exhibits the multiplicity of the 'translocal' (Velayutham and Wise 2005). So, for the Tasmania Karens, the shared experience of suffering and the narratives that could accompany this history may no longer be a central unifying force or may only become so later. For now, the initial 'glue' is pragmatic community-building.

Perhaps insufficient time, smaller numbers and people resources among the these particular Karens combines with high social capitals (high local social cohesion) to preclude an overt Karen nationalism in Tasmania. The demographics of the group (older, predominately female, Christian, low incomes, as noted above) may partly explain these trends. The particular use of the internet - mostly for social connection both locally and transnationally, especially by youth – is also shaped by the literacy of the group. For instance, only those literate in Burmese (very few individuals in Tasmania) seem to access Burma news and political content regularly. Certainly, while not enough time has elapsed for 'unconscious' cultural reproduction (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993, cited in Vertovec 1996) and nationalism to become 'banal' or 'subconscious' (Bilig 1995, cited in Burrell 2006: 168), Karens also have understandably troubled 'national identities'. Ethnic identity trumps national identity (identities) for these Karen, and for now, pragmatic concerns trump these. The ethnic identity trump is exemplified by the pride shown in 'being Karen', but also in some teens' declarations that they were 'born in Thailand'. I found on more than one occasion that teenagers would identify as 'Thai' especially to strangers, rather than saying they were 'from Burma' as they were indeed born in a camp within Thailand's borders, and a Thai identity is

more recognisable[58]. But 'identity' is also supported through community ritual, language and material expression rather than explicit narratives. Perhaps this is not only evidence of a pragmatic trump, but how places and faith can provide an alternative rallying ground for political and persecuted identities. For example, while many of Cho's (2011: 203) participants had activist backgrounds, and half were Buddhists involved with local Burmese monasteries, continuing with religious and resistance membership was important although often accessed 'indirectly' through the internet. Cho (2011: 207) explains that while the internet offers own-language content, 'online media, which has a heavy emphasis on human rights stories, also leads to a feeling of victimhood'. Cho (2011) found this was the case even among New Zealand-born, although young people were more involved with cultural preservation than political organisations. For the Tasmania Karen, being Christian, efforts to maintain their culture and language, and community building all dovetail to form a slightly different, more local and less political set of ethno-religious pragmatic aims. For instance, Therah, the established religious leader in the State, visited an interstate friend *Therah Deh* to talk about the Tasmanian Karens need for someone more confident with English. The men spoke together, and *Therah Deh* agreed to relocate to Tasmania as an additional English-speaking leader and translator. *Therah Deh* is a key go-between for administrative matters both with the church and State services and is an energetic youth leader; but does conduct devotions in Sgaw. Conversely, Mrs H and MRC worker Mrs N had thought that surely an Australian Karen Organisation (AKO) would have been instrumental to this enlistment of *Therah Deh*. It appears that *informal* networks – with Karen pastors or lay persons, family and friends both local and interstate – are central to social capital, flows of information and practical and spiritual resources. Conversely, hierarchy and 'Karen' institutions have proven problematic in Australia and are contested as the 'Karen' diaspora is so diverse. For example, matters of representation and the formation of Australian Karen organisations (such as the Karen Democratic Development Organisation Bendigo) have been challenged by Karens of different regions, religions and ethnic groupings (Baptist Union representative pers. com. 2016; see Couch, Adonis and MacLaren 2010; cf Rangkla 2013). These findings also show how transnational organisations and concerns can be disconnected from local organisational and social structures and irrelevant to daily efforts (van der Meulen 2009; cf Castles 2002).

[58] In conversation Karens are often mistaken for Koreans, and many people are unfamiliar with the name Burma, even the location of the country. Once, I described Karens as refugees from Burma/Myanmar, but an international visitor, unaware of the political situation in Myanmar, protested there was no war going on there.

The role of the local in resettler resources

Thus, in exploring lived experience, not only are group narratives (shared identity and past experiences) important, settlement 'stage' is salient as current circumstances are not constituted only by broader economic and social patterns but local action and networks. These Karens are a local group, and their energies are directed at local concerns. The action, leadership direction and assistance are local and enacted by local people. Local concerns, however, are also 'Karen' concerns. For instance, Karens across Australia are nominally associated with KBCA (Karen Baptist Church Australia), as they attend annual gatherings, and youth and leaders have been seen wearing KBCA camp t-shirts and the 'Australia Karen' uniform – smocks and shirts with white with blue embroidery. But these ethno-nationalist organisations have not directly provided or appointed leaders among the Tasmania Karen. In contrast, the local is a significant feature of leadership concerns and characterisations. For example, at one point a local Karen explicitly stated 'we have no leader', but I observed a range of people operating as leaders, and as go-to people for community decisions and translation. Karen leadership is often an organic process, with decisions made by discussion and leadership conferred on good communicators (see Rajah 2008). Further, there are many Therah and Therah Mu among the group who take formal roles, although none are paid positions. So, while I took this statement as speaking to the relatively small size and informal organisational structure of the group, layers of meaning are added by this study. The local action suggests an egalitarian organisational structure and/or a rejection of broader pan-Karen national groups. There are perhaps not only feelings of (local) independence, but lingering feelings of interdependence (on locals) in the group; foremost, these Karens face the practical realities of having no ordained pastor, so religious observances are compromised. As further evidence of the salience of the local, in early 2018 I joined another local pastor to assist *Therah* with paperwork to gain acknowledgement by a local Christian organisation as a pastoral leader (able to apply for ordination and act as a celebrant). This is a formal, registered role within a relatively formidable bureaucratic structure that required a current pastoring role and applicant agreement with Christian rites and organisational fundaments. *Therah* has over 30 years of pastoring experience, having completed four years training in Burma, travelled as a missionary to another village, and assisted to establish a Bible college with other leaders in Mae La camp, and has operated as a pastor in Tasmania over a decade. The ordination application presents a conundrum, a potential exclusion. To date, the question remains if the local body will recognise *Therah's* training and experience or enforce the requisite training in (English-language) theological studies. It is uncertain whether this

Pastor's local work among a local people will be recognised, or to what degree. But the ordination process does demonstrate the relevance of local networks, and the insolvency of transnational social capitals for local settings (see van der Meulen 2012). Thus, while friendly locals were able to assist *Therah*, no one from this Pastor's broader networks was engaged as a helper. While local networks (myself and another Karen leader, plus a non-Karen pastor) were used to assist the application for local recognition, this carried no guaranteed access to opportunity as the local social structures privilege and presuppose English competence and Western training (cf Schech 2014). This is a microstructural limit on civic engagement and opportunity, similar to those found by van der Meulen (2012) in his study of Dutch-African congregations. Just as van der Meulen (2012) found the needs and contribution of the African congregation held less sway, this study found that as the Karen community currently lack an ordained pastor, they rely on outsiders to perform some ceremonies. As noted in the Methods, this means that ceremonies might be performed in English or only include some Sgaw, could cause and disorganisation as leaders and listeners were insensible to what was spoken and different expectations about structure and length jarred. These are 'discomforts' (Noble 2005, cited in Wise and Velayutham 2009: 8). These are perhaps not explicit exclusions but perhaps are routine micro-injustices or everyday racisms, experienced only amorphously and embedded in practices (Essed 1991, 2002, cited in Wise and Velayutham 2009: 7-8). Thus, while the locals mean well, the context operates to both limit and provide opportunities. Reciprocal relations offer bridging capital but the opportunity for one man's recognition and ordination does stand to benefit the whole community. This is a singular finding about the broader benefits of bridging capitals for religious resettlers (cf Leonard 2004).

Resettlers and 'success'

Unlike unforced migrants who may arrive with greater cultural capitals, resettler 'participation' can be negatively impacted by a lack of education and English (Hugo 2014). Yet, while these indicators still broadly apply to this group, opportunities have arisen, if unevenly, for rural and regional Karens in terms of both economic and social participation (see Background). Resettlers are not passive, but active and busy homemakers and community builders (Waters 2009; Manjikian 2010; see Burrell 2006). Fragmenting forces against migrant groups are formidable in the contemporary context of globalization, postmodernity and disembedding – yet locality can offer boundedness (Knibbe 2007: 18). Karens in Australia demonstrate a willingness, commitment and an eagerness and an energy to stay and put down roots where they are offered a 'place' (see Bennett 2015; Wilding and

Nunn 2016). For these Karens a 'place' is determined by the existence of a local church, the determination and work of religious leaders, and the 'settledness' of families (for example with work and home purchase) which operate together to ameliorate economic and emotional 'stretch' (Massey 1994, cited in Hutchinson 2000). These trends throw into sharp relief how important 'belonging spaces' are to Karens and other refugee groups. Recognising the importance of using and also securing spaces for their own cultural gatherings could contribute inordinately to more sustainable communities in Tasmania. While broader features of sociality, amenity and rurality factor into staying and leaving for this group, having a 'place' for people is central. As Mrs H clarified;

> The first Karen to arrive were a group of 9 in May 2008 [including Therah]. The next two years saw the major influx, but I'd guess about 10 families at least have come and gone....to Melbourne or Brisbane or Perth. There was a time in the early years, when families were leaving, that we held our breath and wondered if they would all choose to go to the mainland to be part of a larger community. I think if [Therah] had gone, then the others may have followed. We breathed a sigh of relief after a group had been to their first KBCA conference on the mainland [perhaps 2010] and returned saying 'Tasmania is the best place'.

This quote shows that resettlers do compare notes (see ABC 2013) and do have imperatives 'other' than those that fit within the standard discourses of success. Mrs H also confirms the centrality of religious leaders to community cohesion, success and 'staying' in the State (see *Mercury* TasWeekend July 4-5 2015).

Doing church as belonging and emplacement

The scenes show that not only are spaces significant, resettler action including religious rituals constitute cultural continuity and create familiar local domains (see Knibbe 2013; Rangkla 2013). Just like Karens in Thailand, these Karens are using their language and cultural practices to search for and secure a locality (Rangkla 2013). These new beginnings have roots in older ways, but 'emplacement' work is shaped by the local actors, the local climate and potentials and people (see below). Rangkla draws on Horstmann (2011) to assert that Christian Karen refugees form a hierarchically structured movement or institutionalised organisation, while Buddhist Karen monastics and practitioners are linked by 'personal ties and exchange networks' (Rangkla 2013: 14). But it is difficult to imagine that these are mutually exclusive forms of social life. While the Karens have a strong history of nationalist

movements and independence agendas in Burma (see Rogers 2004; Harriden 2002 cited in Gilhooly and Lee 2017), these are often intertwined with Buddhist or Christian organisations. For instance, the formal structures that emerge in the context of fragmented and 'moving lives' do not necessarily exclude informal networks, but may be constituted by the personal, given the necessity of trust relations among persecuted peoples, and the smaller, fragmented nature of new arrival and resettler communities. Thus, while institutional and organisational processes are a feature of Karen lives – especially for leaders - informal ties are integral to these processes and for daily, special and religious needs. For instance, community ties, through local, transnational or diasporic networks online (especially personal and faith networks), are common for Tasmanian Karen. Local Karens are careful to support their own people and families (see STARTTS 2009) but do accept assistance for new arrivals from local services and providers, have made local friends and networks. These Karen are also frequent flyers to Brisbane, Perth, Thailand and Burma to meet up with other Karen friends and family, for example, for weddings and funerals and festivals. Christian leaders (interstate and overseas) such as educators and pastors also visit interstate to encourage the other churches, and some visits suddenly re-unite people after decades apart in different locations. Mission trips to the camps (including two groups of Karens and locals from TBC) are about supporting people and programmes. Leaders links to Burma are about establishing or encouraging education. This is not exactly the 'pilgrimage' that Knibbe points out is a flourishing faith activity in the face of *de*-churching (2007: 14) it is more like *re*-churching, a diasporic action driven by Christian calling as much as a Karen confederacy. A travelling Karen pastor told me that his travels around Australia confirmed to him that it was 'because of the church' that the Karens could live on through displacement and the war against them. These actions demonstrate the centrality of faith to resettling action (Worland and Darlington 2010).

While it is becoming somewhat clearer how pragmatic and religious agendas, over nationalistic ones, interact to shape these practices, an interpretation that fits the evidence is that this is community building, or more precisely, ethnic-community-of-faith building. Burrell (2006: 187) reminds us that community is a flexible, communal, public construct that infiltrates into everyday experiences and is made resilient through personal and collective experience and interpretations. In order to apply the label 'community' to this group, it must meet slippery criteria around formal and informal institutions, symbolic and geographic closeness, and measures of reciprocal exchange, social capital, social networks and social

control (Burrell 2006:141-, 178-9). Many of these criteria show early but strong beginnings among these Karen, however, what is clear is that these resettlers are busy with the practicalities of resettling. The focus of these Karen is on maintaining their language and culture while adapting to a new language and culture and living out their faith with their family members. In this context Karens produce and reproduce belonging and locality (see Knibbe 2007). When Karens come together to act, share experiences and intentions together the space becomes a 'place' (Counted 2016) and a diverse group can become a community of people. These are what Leonard (2004) calls bonding capital, the means of 'getting by' within community groups. The substantial people-resources of these Karens must be accounted for as capitals.

People-resources: bonding and bridging capitals

While these resettlers do face barriers to economic participation, particularly to do with English-language proficiency, they have resources and capabilities that can be understood as capital(s). Here, I use what Leonard (2004) calls bonding and bridging capitals, consider how network strength and social capital (people resources) can be both inclusionary and exclusionary. Bonding is an assumed correlate with marginalisation and lack of integration, as groups keep to themselves and do not access cultural capitals (see Deuchar 2011). Bridging capital, that is intercultural relationships, no matter how flimsy, are considered inclusionary and able to foster intercultural communication and community cohesion (see Deuchar 2011; Granovetter 1973). For example, if a community has dense and disparate groups, a single person from one group befriending people from another group can operate as an informal 'tie' that facilitates the exchange of local cultural knowledge, thus the relationship constitutes and creates social and cultural capital (Granovetter 1973). Thus, the local friends and networks in the Tasmanian community who have befriended Karens demonstrate this cohesive power (Granovetter 1973). Granovetter (1979) asserts there is power in even a 'weak tie', a single link between groups. These links, for example even if relationships between leaders of different cultures were uneasy or distant, they still allowed Karens to participate meaningfully in the service and use the space. This created 'space' to participate by taking up an offering, praying in Sgaw, and using the space for baptisms, weddings and their own services. Further, while interactions were not without discomforts and misrecognition, these sat alongside ethics of care within and outside the space, especially in the early resettlement period, and certain interactions became close ongoing interpersonal relationships across groups.

While these Karens are very close-knit, their existing in-group networks and resources (bonds) also helped them to build capacity outside their network (bridge). Leonard (2004) presents evidence that a loss of bonding capital is not necessarily implicated in the formation of bridging capital, although does caution that bridging capitals are often more available to particular individuals or families, thus have mixed or uneven benefits to the entire community. For example, it could be argued that the families involved in language exchanges with me had considerable 'resources', and exchange constituted bridging capital. So, while Therah was a key leader he had barely sufficient English, and while Naw had a large household which afforded her more income she was an at-home mother with little English or opportunity to practice. Both households, however, had considerable English due to the presence of older teens and/or a parent in paid work, plus both had considerable other 'resources' to share with me. Thus, they built on existing capitals. Therah offered language training and asked for some reciprocation as needs arose. *Naw's* friend asked me to teach her, and Naw was able reciprocate with friendship and food. Both households lavished me with vegetables and clothing as gifts. Access to bridging capitals (ability to 'get ahead'), however, did differ between households. For example, several non-breadwinner households I was also associated with had less resources for exchange (see Scene 7). These were often mothers with younger children, who had little opportunities for English-speaking interactions. These women would often simply arrive during lessons at *Naw Wah's* house, and like Pi and Pu they would sit across the room or gather to the side of the little table to soak in something from the lesson. I would include each one, and sometimes the children in the verbal exchanges; but they were not receiving regular lessons. So, while these women benefited through *Naw* (bonding capital), the community as a whole cannot be considered direct beneficiaries of the English resources. This fits with Leonard's (2004) finding that bridging capital involves exclusions and uneven benefits. However, as I will address reflexively below, my interest in and need for Sgaw and imbued the Karen language with value, thus enabling any speaker to exchange with me. Thus, cultural difference is co-opted for a 'non-assimilationist' form of integration (Wise 2009: 40; see Reflexive conclusion).

Conclusion: The affordance of space for convivial and emplacement work

The actions of resettlers and receiving communities in this space plays out against a broader backdrop of debates around resettlement success, and the two-way process of settlement. 'Integration' expectations, for these resettlers, are both incommensurate with community

stage and priorities, and unbalanced given the two-way nature of integration. Karens have been doing resettlement and sharing the space of the chapel for a decade, and in these two sets of actions there are two sets of signs.

The first set of signs show how multicultural interaction can facilitate religious belonging, placemaking and civic participation, but can also maintain exclusions. In this socioreligious space the division between Karens and others was at times both physical and linguistic. But with continued observation, it was clear that rituals and other inclusionary practices gave these Karens meaningful participation and a freedom to use the space for their own rituals and ethno-religious needs. Further, while discomforts and misrecognition were in evidence, these sat alongside ethics of care within and outside the space, especially in the early resettlement period. In addition, close ongoing interpersonal and transversal relationships were evident across groups. Along with physical space and practical support, the emotional support structure of the community, especially the community of faith, (and religion, and connection to God), has helped the Tasmanian Karen better deal with their foreign context (see Counted 2016). These practices and interactions involve transversal work and outward gestures of inclusion; characterised as 'doing recognition'. Yet Karens are as much transversal workers in this community as key community 'helpers'. Ethics of care created in this space persisted after the early resettlement stage and continued outside of the church walls. Karen transversals work alongside other transversals to exchange cultural knowledge and build bridges into the host community. In this study, language exchange was an example of building bridging capitals with a few of these Karens, while the work towards an Australian recognition (ordination) has potential benefit for all of these Christian Karens.

The second set of signs speak to the actions of resettlers in this space, which show how religious and ethnic belonging work constitutes 'place making'. Community closeness among the Karens constituted community capitals (bonding capitals), but also operated to build and distribute bridging capitals. Karen leaders do significant work within the community to build and maintain in-group bonds that facilitate language maintenance (including literacy for the previously illiterate), and religious and cultural continuity. These continuities provide a 'cushion' for newcomers, constitute place making and foster belonging, 'emplacement' and ties to both new and old homes (Erdal 2014; Knibbe 2013). The creation of this socio-cultural 'domain of the familiar' (Knibbe 2013) can be attributed to both refugee energies, and the availability and affordances of a physical space. So, belonging in *this* space is significantly

shaped by the purpose of the place: a house of worship, a gathering place for people of faith, a site for religious rituals. For Christian Karens who have been displaced, gathering with their own people and together with local people for ritual enactment can carve out a coherent 'place' and 'emplace' Karens and their ways in a new home/church setting (see Rangkla 2011). Thus, local people in a local church loom large as creators of a small 'spark' of civic engagement (Amin 2008: 8), and room for sociality. Karen transversal-, belonging- and home-making work demonstrates that, with the opportunities offered by access to socio-religious spaces, resettlers are 'solvent', that is, active pragmatic community-builders that use a range of resources to keep and seek out beneficial social networks. This group of Karen have mostly stayed in this small state due to the energies invested in family reunion and the available 'space' for community-building. Notwithstanding this 'success', these expended energies are 'sunk costs' in people and places here that make leaving difficult. As a visiting Karen pastor explained to me 'it takes energy to move'. These opportunity costs must be accounted for when considering 'staying' and 'leaving' (secondary settlements) as successful.

This study affords a view beyond institutional integration and success (employment and education) to see how participation in ethnic, religious and community networks can constitute capital gains for individuals and ethnic groups (cf Santoro and Wilkinson 2006). So, while problem discourses and moral panics around refugees operate to position these placeless people as undesirable and 'out of place' (see Cresswell 2014), and while mundane bureaucratic processes can also exclude, belonging and sense of place can be reconstructed in local places by local people. Rules and rhythmic repetitions of use can tame the bewilderment of spaces, while allowing for (re)invention (see Amin 2008). This means that belonging places can be constructed by the formally displaced, using familiar, even small and seemingly mundane routines.

Reflexive (methodological) conclusion

> It is the poorest communities who receive the most attention from government agencies and social researchers. Yet their voices remain largely unheard and their experiences much misunderstood, and we suggest that the obligation to reflect on practices, whether of participatory development or of ethnographic research, is critical (Engelsman et al 2017: 13).

While the process and implications of friendship as method has been discussed in Chapter 4, and folded through the Findings, a reflexive (methodological) conclusion is used here to capture final reflections on the research process. This research blended methods from the anthropological tradition of observation with friendship as methods to see ritual and interaction patterns. Close qualitative investigations invoke concerns or the 'communal issues' of inductive research – issues of reflexivity, trustworthiness (rigor), representation and interpretation (Prosser 1998; Hall 1997). The following paragraphs present a reflexive evaluation of the research (rigor), prompted by each of these (methodological) issues.

In terms of reflexivity, for example, in attending church and events I necessarily locate myself in the scene, can variously interact and be a 'felt' presence, can see and be seen, and potentially invade or comfort others. Qualitative research takes the researcher-as-instrument so there are ethical dimensions implied here, and methodological ones. As for methodological issues, I can be traced in the data (see Prosser 1998 chapter 7 and 8). I must consider the sensitivity of my instrument - my biases and blind spots (Willis 2013: 318), in order to assess rigor. As for the ethical dimensions, I address the researcher position in the next section, when considering research relationships and representation. As for rigor, ongoing reflective memos record the research process (and process issues), aid immersion, and scrutinise emotions[59], reactions, what worked well and what did not, and why (Willis 2013: 318). In this way, 'ethnographic depth' comes from not only 'just being there' (Wise in Neal 2015: 994), but from sustained encounters alert to the sensory qualities of a social setting (Wise in Neal 2015: 994). Much of my writing - from the research journal to field notes (including voice memos I began to use) to thesis drafting - attest to this conflation of reflexive and descriptive content. In short, I felt unable to write unreflexively. The rigor of friendship ethnography is in participating, which adds longitudinal observations including

[59] Wise calls these 'sensory qualities' that can be observed and felt (in Neal 2015: 993-4; see also Wise 2010)

emotions onto verbal layers of meaning. In research and life there is often a disjunction between what is said and what happens (Bryman 2012; Pink et al 2016). For example, at one point a Karen explicitly stated 'we have no leader'; but I observed a range of people operating as leaders, and as go-to people for community decisions and translation. So, while I took this statement as speaking to the relatively small size of the group, an egalitarian local organisational structure and/or a rejection of pan-Karen national groups, these layers of meaning can be added to by this study. For instance, in comparison with Cho's (2011) research, this statement may signal a broader desire to leave behind past political organisations. This study found that these Karens operate ordained pastor, so the statement is likely to relate to the practical realities of this for cultural and religious observances.

Researcher friendship: the tensions of rigor and personal relations

As the rigor of friendship ethnography is found in the familiarity fostered by time participating and observing (see Irvine et al 2008; Tillmann-Healy 2003), it is appropriate I reflect on the emotional, and physical dimensions of this here. For example, during field work I experienced comforts (the familiarity of ritual, the pleasure of peoples' warm greetings, friendship, company and shared food), mild social discomforts (unfamiliar languages and social practices), and moments or feelings of severe distress (hearing about or witnessing violence or distress from severe illness and deaths). These are best articulated by including physical sensations and emotions, as the knowledge I have of Tasmanian Karen lives was obtained and can be expressed by reference to embodied, sensory and 'tacit' knowledge – a knowing that was often non-verbal, not discussed, and 'beyond words' (see Neal 2005; Pink et al 2016; Wise 2010).

In terms of comfort and friendships many interactions in the TFC space and among the Karens were, although almost regularly exhausting, personally gratifying. To look is to be involved and to touch (including with the eyes) is to connect and identify with people (Pink et al 2016:147). The warmth and lingering touches many different Karens signified friendship to and with me, and I experienced connection with the broader community from handshakes (discussed above), and visits sitting down around some paperwork or snacks. These gestures were strong 'traces' of non-verbal performances and the embodiment of doing relationship. These traces established and maintained relationships and operated as a (non-verbal) bridge into another language and life world. This epistemology moves from participatory methodology to researcher as engaged participant, and approaches recognition work, rather than requiring '(ethnic) engagement'. The affordances of this sustained ethnography were

that I was able to entered real life co-located myself in their homes in a non-interview setting. Pink and others refer to this as '[research] slippage' (2016: 238). Rather than a 'slippage', however, the personal and face-to-face mode of research was key to gaining insight in this project. For example, seeing how Karens worship, relax at home, raise their children and eat gave me an encounter and insights that was not spoken out but sat 'beyond words' (Pink et al 2016: 247). These observations were not simply 'non-verbal' and requiring attention to body language - although this was a significant task and challenge - nor were they entirely shaped by a lack of shared language, as English and Karenglish generally allowed us to function. The observations were of unspoken strengths and challenges that contributed to the picture of solvency that emerged.

The combination of close familiarity and a mutual inability to use verbal gymnastics to communicate necessitated a greater reliance on the non-verbal, which is to say, the emotional cues of the other. This sensitivity took on a perpetuating role, bringing intimacy and understanding to our relations. For instance, I got to know *Therah* as a person while becoming more aware of his different duties, priorities, daily and occasional activities. As a result, I was better able to negotiate time with him, assist him, and 'know' him. This collection of knowledges allowed me to recognise what the leadership role was like, and when he became excited in, wary, tired or ill. Whereas earlier in our relationship his emotions and world was closed to me – not just because we were still strangers, but because Karen facial expressions, like many South Asians, can be very subtle. It may not seem extraordinary to be reading body language and facial expression for research, yet in my English-speaking world sophisticated verbal messages often supplement communications – so at first, I was ignorant without these props. These learnings seemed particular to this sustained study but are a part of the broader subjectivities and 'selves' a qualitative researcher brings to the field (Reinharz 1997), and to interpretation.

Care for the participant researcher

Fieldwork and friendship creates risks for the researchers, who may 'reveal and invest so much of ourselves' and is thus exposed and can be face hurts and disappointments. Some were mild social discomforts, like being part of a conversation and laughter without understanding anything that was spoken (regularly) or becoming suddenly aware of having not removed my shoes, midway through a house visit (once). Twice, rude-sounding observations were made about my singleness and childlessness, and after my marriage I was questioned about pregnancy by a familiar-but-not-friend Karen. So many times, I would

arrive invited to a Karen home only to discover the householders occupied elsewhere, having forgotten or shifted priorities to some other event or practical matter. More severe discomforts resulted from being present while a family appeared to take enjoyment from violent movies, or worse, were watching amateur footage of Thai girls fighting to the death on social media. I not only had ethical quandary about Facebook, I found the 'feed' from one person who Friended me on social media (see Young and Robards 2013) distressing, as they included reminders of present poverty and dislocation from loved ones, past photos of family members laid out in coffins, and propaganda videos from TBB which used the mutilated bodies of villagers and soldiers found in the jungle to explain the Karen resistance. These 'experienced' discomforts were difficult, and hard to pin down and describe as data. Other events that troubled me such as witnessing a mother bring her fist down on a child's forehead were different from seeing girls sulking in church, youth unable to read Karen or speak English, or hearing a young woman say she 'just watch TV' during the week. Different too is hearing *Pu* had been tied to a tree and tortured by the Burma army, or seeing glimpses of past lives in the blue tattoos along men's forearms, and in hands hard bitten by labour, and fingers missing sections. My emotions are an investment of self and an engagement with oppression but do not approximate the hardships of my participants, nor the discomforts of having to work illegally to research and help victims of abuse on the TBB (see Khuankaew and Norsworthy 2000, cited in Tillmann-Healy 2003: 743). Reflecting on these emotions and reactions in memos – and debriefing with supervisors and friends is intended to 'clarify the data' (see Musante 2014; Willis 2013; Wise in Neal 2015). But none of these encounters felt right to classify with such coldness. Just as emotions linger, decisions also remained about what to 'do' with this 'data'. I questioned how to interpret these multicultural encounters, as they seemed so far removed from those described by Wise and others – with words like 'mundane' and 'everyday' (Wise and Velayutham 2009; Cresswell 2014; Miller 1997; Picken 2013; Williamson 2015). I also found it difficult to 'leave with the data' and withdraw to write. I was part of the community, and with friendship there is no 'leaving the field' process (see Tillmann-Healy 2003). My emotions and memories, in any case, would follow me home.

The research process included regular encounters within and outside the church space that resulted in relationships (Wise in Neal 2015: 993-4). Research relationships are instrumental, so have ethical dimensions (Wise in Neal 2015: 993-4) and methodological ones. Observation in this research was necessarily participatory, to access tacit knowledge (Musante 2014), and religious rituals among Karens (see Rangkla 2013). Tacit knowledge is

harder to articulate, 'hear' and access than what is made 'explicit' for example by speaking about it (Zahle 2012, cited in Musante 2014: 252). Musante intimates that the tacit may be difficult to observe or articulate, so sits outside awareness, only becoming available to the researcher through reflexivity (Davies 2010b, Jackson 2010, Zahle 2012, cited in Musante 2014: 252). For example, my task during and after field work was to question my assumptions to better discover the hidden or unconscious culture of the group by critical observation. And while early observations provided less 'clarity' at the time of writing, these became an important point of reference – or point of difference, compared to later in the project when relationships and complexity had built up over time. For instance, early in the field work I was able to see an ostensibly inclusive congregation were physically divided in a shared space. As I continued to not only observe but 'get to know' the space and the people I saw multiplicity and exceptions not only within the inclusions afforded by the space but relational inclusions or integrations. From there, I was able to more clearly articulate the interactional dimensions that were located in and around the space. Conversely, these relational and temporal dimensions create dilemmas around over-identification with participants (Wise in Neal 2015: 997). An example of the dangerous mix that is research and relations are the times I made myself sick with worry over not the veracity but the ethics of this observational study – asking myself, do the outcomes justify these means, these methods?

Representation and interpretation – the political becomes personal

Issues of representation and interpretation are conflated, as in this reflective section. My implicit claims to speak truth about these Karen through observation butts up against (post-modern assumptions of subjectivity in truth claims and) assumptions that personal agentic action is difficult to generalise from (Fine 2003: 44). Yet personal enactment of culture and interpersonal interactions in the local context are the concrete micro-context for broader social order (Fine 2003: 43; Wise 2009). The qualitative approach I chose involved 'relationships with a few' (Wise cited in Neal 2015: 993). I became familiar with 'the congregation' of Karens but focused on a few families and key actors as friends. I developed close ties with, and care deeply for several people and their family members (see Dominguez 2012). But to maintain researcher distance I aggregate characters and severs any claim to 'capture' a particular people. Also, recognising the tensions around leadership for these Karens, I do not speak for them. Instead, the focus is on describing the shared culture and

interactions in public spaces, and the ongoing relationships and negotiations between the different groups in the congregation (Part 1) and recounting these Karen lives (Part 2).

I did not press for long interviews nor subject Karen people to extensive questions. But I have a set of friends, and I have 'embodied', emotive knowledges (Pink et al 2016) of their lives - a felt experience tricky to 'enword' (see Dominguez 2012:21). I learnt about Karen lives and stories by observation and relationship, reading hands and faces and bodies for feelings (Cartwright 2012: 152 cited in Pink et al 2016: 242). Conversely, I also contend that in many senses of the word, the Tasmanian Karen have not (yet) begun to 'speak'. My position as an interlocutor is problematized on both fronts. Observations can obtain only a 'wobbly authority' (Fine 2003: 42). Observations are only ever slices and glimpses rather than a total sense of a people group (Denzen 1997, cited in Tillmann-Healy 2003). I have revealed my position at the window to group behaviour – I climbed through to observe, and stayed on, to join in on the action. But I must not claim to have 'captured' these Karen and can only present *a* representation of the actions and interactions (Fine 2003: 54-55). And this approach has left the very silences that have become an important part of 'telling' this story of these Karens.

Evaluative conclusion

This study began with a desire to know the resettlement story of the Tasmanian Karen. I anticipated engaging with a key theme in migration research - identity theory and its subsidiaries, identity politics, belonging, and cultural maintenance. Yet while contemporary Western psychological selves are highly individualised (see Ezzy 2013) this may not translate well to collectivist consciousness in other groups (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). Furthermore, the experiences and priorities of refugees may differ from migrant stages (generations). So, the micro sociological approach (Macionis and Plummer 2012) and the propositions of everyday multiculturalism (Wise and Velayutham 2009) in this study represented a turn away from these preoccupations.

This study relied upon middle range theories. Identity theory and other discourses in migrant research were critiqued already bloated, and for an additional two methodological reasons that became salient during the fieldwork. Firstly, I argue that as a 'first generation' of migrants the Tasmanian Karen do not have a history that has yet become 'history' (viz Gans' work with American Jews 1952), nor an identity that has become 'speakably salient'. The

lower levels of English, and importance of Sgaw among the Tasmanian Karen is a central but not exclusive feature of this. 'Identity' as a social science construct is fluid, and Gans' (1979) work with second and third generation immigrants demonstrates this. For these Karen, now – as I detailed in this thesis, ethnic identity (and story) is definitive (Walters 2009: 130), and instrumental rather than expressive (Gans 1979). This means that identity is actions and feelings (Gans 1979: 9), so they can be observed as communal lifestyles, but not asked for as they are not a personal identity that is accessible nor relatable in ways that translate well, nor would any formal extraction of such stories be practical and ethical. Secondly, the pragmatic imperatives of a community, and behavioural ethnicity are active not passive 'options' among a range that individuals take (Waters 2009; see Manjikian 2010). Ethnic cultures and organisations are important and needed by early groups of migrants (Gans 1979). Resettlers are place-makers that work to create domains of the familiar within which to practice and emplace their religious and cultural ways. The Tasmanian Karen act collectively with ritual and values, while identity concerns are a 'later' focus for groups who need time to recover, regroup and meet pragmatic agendas before they consider being and belonging explicitly, and for an outside audience. Identity is not a theoretical floodlight here, but one among other, softer lights used to look closely at the interaction and intimate spaces of Karen resettlement to Tasmania, considering practices as the vehicle towards belonging and home-making.

While other ethnographies limit work to description of people, not meeting them (Fine 2003: 55), friendship ethnography has just such an aim. This exchange and reciprocity operated as research beneficence. The sustained nature of the participatory observation provided embodied and affective knowledges, as things and smells and hands and faces could be 'read' for meanings (Wise in Neal 2015; Wise 2010). This afforded a view of the 'faces of oppression', and the 'off stage' struggles and strengths of resettlers (Goffman 1969; Tillmann-Healy 2003: 737). Reflexivity was instrumental to ongoing friendship ethics, and friendship as methods acted transversally to build bridging capitals (see Tillmann-Healy 2003; Engelsman et al 2017). This reciprocity allowed not only a set of observations, but ongoing 'recognition work' (Noble 2009; see also Hugo 2014, Marlowe 2010). This familiarity can disrupt hierarchy and give rise to ally behaviour and advocacy (Tillmann-Healy 2003; Engelsman et al 2017) as demonstrated in the feedback session and researcher recognition as a 'for' Karen helper, informant and friend.

Ethics and affordances of friendship ethnography

The research design offers reformed methods for research with resettlers. It presents a reconstitution of established ethnographic and friendship methods to inform a reflexive, relational study. The affordances of friendship ethnography are evidenced by the ethic and rigor of familiarity, social proximity, reflexivity and reciprocity (see Tillmann-Healy 2003; Engelsman et al 2017). This flexible, inductive approach cycled through 'action and reflection', but emphasised the observation of life worlds over imposed 'programmatic… requirements' (Picken 2013:244). Sustained observation offered an up-close empirical investigation of group interaction systems (akin to Fine 2003), and a view of the micro structural conditions of settling. Friendship methods, including speaking another language and *la pa ti dor deh*, contributed respect and rigor to the research engagement (see Irvine et al 2017; Tillmann-Healy 2003). This approach includes a recognition of the exclusions that happen through (English) language and power relations, yet also recognises community capitals, and seeks to redress power imbalances. Through language exchange, Sgaw was actively positioned *as* capital. My desire to learn Karen communicated worth and gave the language a value within exchange systems.

This research used ethnographic immersion to make reflexive investigations about humanitarian-background settlers to Tasmania. This project used new and established methods to see unfamiliar lives and hear unfamiliar voices speaking into a deliberately narrow, earnest space created by sustained research, reciprocity and personal engagement. Cross-language research has implications for linguistic translation and analysis, so requires a focus on hermeneutics (Fersch 2013), that is, meaning. But in this study non-verbal and traditional communication methods to decentre the dominance of English (see Cho 2011). This study also validated objects and rituals as manifestations of culture and as communicative tools (Prosser 1998). English language and communication difficulties are a key concern and limiting factor for Karen resettlers (Watkins et al 2012). But validating the experiential over the verbal and the verbal over the textual can be an important way to displace powerful ways of knowing (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999: 49ff). As a non-Karen I remain a linguistic and cultural outsider, and this impacted what was 'shared' with me. However, sharing life and stories followed several of Cho's principles of research with Karens: informality, building trust and mutuality, and becoming a 'useful part of the community' (2011: 197-8).

Empirical investigations of interactional systems are a window into prevailing structural conditions (Fine 2003: 43), however, rather than emphasise problems and disadvantage this study explored everyday resettler solvency, and hopeful encounters. This research with Tasmanian Karens has yielded many positive insights about the group in this stage, their priorities and resources. These Christian Karen continue to rely on each other and other Christians for a range of supports from educational to financial. An informal economy in vegetables and lessons has sprung up. The organisational strengths of Karens are evident in the pursuit of education in villages and the establishment of schools and churches in refugee camps and have ensured a resettlement community whose support structure is comprised of significant internal spokes. Religion, and the church space to practice their faith, lends considerable strength to these spokes, providing place and premise for positive social interactions with those of shared place, and faith.

Thesis contribution

This study offers a recalibrated picture of these resettlers, the active nature of resettlement, and the place of micro publics in the process and 'success' of settlement. This disciplinary contribution is augmented by reformed methods for research with resettlers (addressed above). The research findings shed light on the processes and practices of resettling in a regional, religious context that lend complexity to refugee disadvantage and dispersal policies. The presence of 'diverse' groups in the space is patterned and reveals how the 'given space' replicates exclusions that continue outside the church in the social and political setting of contemporary Australia. While there is yet more room for improvement in the informal interaction between resettler and receiving communities, churches are promising sites for these kinds of interactions, whether they be for a religious service, a wedding or other celebration, or a concert. This examination of small group behaviour shows how spaces of welcome contain faces of welcome that are meaningful and have a modest impact on community capitals. Karen contributions include the economic, with resettler communities investing in the local housing, but extend beyond this as people build families and gardens while establishing and maintaining churches, ethic culture and language.

These resettlers

This study offers a recalibrated picture of these resettlers. While the priorities of Karen peoples have political and religious elements in Burma, priorities on arrival to new villages, refugee camps and upon resettlement have been the establishment of churches – as places of

worship and of education and of culture. Imperatives of home- and place-making centre on language, and ethno-religious cultural maintenance. These are sometimes, but not always, political in nature (cf Cho 2011). Thus, while these Karens could be classified as an 'emergent' diaspora, this may ignore in-group diversity and essentialise historical 'Karen identity' (see Anthias 1998). While research and reports use 'Burmese' to indicate nationality regardless of ethnicity, and a Burmese diaspora is indicative of groups such as in Auckland (Cho 2011), for other groups neither 'Burmese' nor diaspora quite fits. For these Tasmanian Karen their action patterns have a decidedly local, rather than transnational flavour. While the term diaspora speaks to transnational relations that are ongoing, this can gloss the salience of the local, and the pragmatic (and religious) rather than political nature of doing settling for these resettlers. In short, these Tasmanians are not so much a diaspora doing identity and ethno-national and cultural maintenance mediated by Burmese and Buddhist associations and online and international activism (Cho 2011) as Karen Christians doing resettling in a local, often multicultural, religious setting.

(Religious) resettlement as active

This study demonstrates the active nature of settlement as outlined in previous research and reports (see Burrell 2006; Manjikian 2010; Bennett 2015). Resettlers are proactive community builders and place-makers with significant internal support structures. This bonding capital and belonging work constitutes emplacement, and these activities form a cultural 'cushion' that soften settlement and facilitate 'getting along' for new and old arrivals to the State. This cushion provides a landing place for Karens of a range of backgrounds and faiths and allows a continuation of cultural competencies and compensations for shifting social statuses (see Manjikian 2010). So, these ethnic gatherings not only offer sociality and comfort, they provide first language literacy and ethnic civic participation. Furthermore, community mutuality and informal exchanges have created a micro-economy. This study with religious resettler Karens shows the affordances of religious affiliation and participation for resettler solvency. As a community of faith, religious practice and connection to God has helped the Tasmanian Karen better deal with their foreign context (see Counted 2016). In addition, just as religious affiliation is a powerful organising force for migrants (see Burrell 2006), these de-territorialised Karens enact transformed but meaningful social, religious and moral-economic participation. These micro-social strengths and the sociality of ethnic family and faith networks are poorly accounted for in broader resettlement dispersal and integration discourses.

The resettler period is busy and communities often desire independence, and establishing churches and schools are central to these activities for Christian Karen. Karens are unwilling to overly burden local 'hosts' but show both organisational capacities and ongoing needs. Just as Collins found, much community action materialises around leaders and other key organisers (2009: 225). Community concerns and needs, therefore, can be a substantial burden on leaders and community resources. Local work opportunities can impact the sustainability of the community and compound these burdens. As Collins (2009: 217) argued, however, feelings of estrangement can give rise to community 'border crossings'; these resettlers have been proactive in building bridges with locals. These resettlers asked to use the chapel as a space to meet and have also committed to attending services and to friendships that have arisen in and around this local chapel. Thus, this study highlighted how Tasmanian Karen have not simply 'arrived' at the church, and they do not simply 'appear' in the space. They are active participants, and their physical presence has implications for civic engagement and belonging (see Fozdar and Hartley 2014). For migrants, including refugees, constructions of 'home' and 'belonging' are fluid, but resettlers do act to 'exert agency in their own ways' to manage these geographic, emotional and ambivalent dimensions (Erdal 2014).

Micro spaces as micro publics

This study demonstrates the central importance of physical spaces, like a local church or other gathering place, to resettlement (see Manjikian 2010). This local church space can be conceptualised as a 'contact zone' or convivial arena (see Wise 2005; 2009; Collins 2009). Unlike a market or mall, however, the chapel is not place of public encounters and flow with anonymous others (see Amin 2008) but a place for ongoing and routine interaction between cultural groups. Thus, the relations that can arise here are often 'consequential' in peoples' lives (Fine 2003: 53). The action in this space is meaningful due to a shared (Christian) culture and rites that allow civic participation and can bridge differences (see Hall 1997; Collins 2009; Fine 2003). When shared, this space is a micro public (Wise 2009) so has potential for both misrecognition and recognition, and both shallow encounters and deeper exchanges and relations (Wise 2009). So, the interactions in this micro context do reflect broader social patterns (Fine 2003: 43), such that space sharing gives rise to exclusions, especially in terms of the dominant language (see Wilding and Nunn 2017). For example, the lack of shared language at TFC seemed to stifle cross-cultural interaction, yet other cultural separations and anxieties are likely to play a part in this 'language barrier' (see Hudson et al

2009: 210). Moreover, the inclusions afforded by the space do not always translate to opportunities, for example, to define or own the space (see Cresswell 2014). However, this study has added to other studies to make explicit how spaces can become 'belonging places' for resettlers, and how using and securing a space to gather contributes to cultural maintenance and community-building (see Cresswell 2014; Erdal 2014; Rangkla 2013; Knibbe 2013; Wilding and Nunn 2017). So, when this space is used solely by Karens operates as a place to 'be' Karen, to display and maintain cultural ways, and to 'do' church and maintain religious practices. This is an everyday multicultural space for 'hopeful' encounters (Wise 2005), and where encounters can allow a 'togetherness in difference' (Ang 2001). That is to say, this interaction space is not free of power imbalances, but has significant affordances for the practices of two-way, even non-assimilatory forms of integration (Wise 2009: 40; Julian et al 1997). Just as Collins (2009) notes, feelings of estrangement can actually give rise to community action by newcomers. And so, while the physical features of the space invite participation in religious rituals, the convivial features of the space mean that it offers a regular if often transient cross-cultural mingling (see Collins 2009), and 'space' to develop a sense of belonging that may contribute to the sustainability of resettlements.

Transversal practices

This study sheds light on transversal practices, and how these can constitute a micro-moral economy (Wise 2009). Both the transient gestures and the ongoing reciprocity evident in this space can be characterised as ethics of care and transversal practices that operate to include and integrate different groups (Thrift 2008 cited in Wise 2009: 7; Back and Sinha 2016). Thus, while spaces are not always egalitarian they may offer some 'democratic resources' (Wise 2009: 7). Transversal labours in this space include micro-exchanges of emotions and gestures like handshakes, and shared food. The transversal and sensual characteristics of the space, and objects in the space like clothing and smells transmit meaning and can be used to communicate culture, sameness and difference. These micro-exchanges offer reciprocity and recognition. This space is a place where boundaries are both demarcated and smudged. Demarcation is evident in the explicit 'welcome to our diverse church' platform talk that characterises the 10am service. But this smudging operates as transversal or translation 'work' to bridge cultural differences (see Wise 2009; Back and Sinha 2016). For example, in the church hall the Karen leave chili out of the food and eat with a spoon, while at home chili and fingertips are used in comfort. Likewise, Anglos share space with worshipers that may

seem unruly or 'different' but can also celebrate and affirm Karen ways of doing Christianity, community, and family as a similar, even at times exemplary set of practices. Anglos derive pleasure and pride from interacting with and assisting Karens and this adds to Leo Collins' (2009: 217) findings that voluntary community work and care is motivated by local needs and activities but also imbued with highly personal and emotional experiences. This creates an informal micro-economy whereby resettlers and their language, cooking and other skills are exchanged: not transformed into commodities, but into valued 'goods'.

Resettlement policy applications

This study adds to understandings of the micro-sociological processes of settlement that are implicated in 'success and staying' relevant to this State. The study findings around the active nature of resettling and solvency of resettlers to exchange micro-moral economic 'goods' lend complexity to refugee success and disadvantage discourses. These findings shed light on the processes and practices of resettling refugees in a regional, religious context in ways that could inform urban resettlement and re-appraise dispersal policies. Community size, English competence and employment opportunities do determine the viability of refugee resettlements (see Hugo 2014; Julian et al 1997; *Mercury* TasWeekend 4-5 July 2015). But informal community interactions are also important to build capacities and capitals. As the comparison with Cho's (2011) research shows, resettlers from Burma are diverse, and religious, nationalist and diasporic identification and action can be equally diverse and contextual. As the number of qualitative studies in rural areas are limited (Gilhooly and Lee 2017; Hiruy 2009; Schech 2014; Wilding and Nunn 2017), this study continues a small but fresh trend. This study shows that considerations for sustainable refugee communities in rural suburban areas like Tasmania need to also consider the significance of the moral economic arena, and how social spaces can foster emplacement and are implicated in ethnic sociality and capitals. This study has also highlighted the resources and agentic action of resettlers, a finding that troubles the host/guest dichotomy found in resettlement discourses. These findings bring a cautionary note to the celebration of secondary resettlements as offering economic and other opportunities for resettlers and receiving communities. Overall, given adequate community support and spaces, participation and employment opportunities, Karens in Australia demonstrate an eagerness and put energy into resettling and staying in places (see Bennett 2015; Background). This has implications for assessments of refugee settlement, re-settlement, success and sustainability for this State. These features could be better accounted for in family reunion visa policies and quotas (see Okhovat et al 2017), and

support for secondary migration. Settling and resettling considerations must be attuned to the social fragmentations and potential loss of moral-economic arenas for resettlers that make any additional new starts difficult (see Julian et al 1997: 157). These are the social equivalent of 'sunk costs' of community and informal networks, which include the people-resources that arise from the routine access to community and church spaces.

Concluding remarks

> A good ethnographer should 'present us with a set of searing images, [and] searing ideas… [to] confront the implications of his scenes' (Fine 2003: 56).

The focus in this thesis was on describing the shared culture and interactions in public spaces, and the ongoing relationships and negotiations between the different groups in the congregation (Part 1) and recounting these Karen lives (Part 2).

Part 1 of the findings showed that the church is a potential space for civic and social participation. The chapel provided a space of encounter and everyday multicultural interaction. Rather than focusing on broader structural 'problems', and popular and nationalistic agendas around integration and success, and the cohesion concerns or identity foci of academia, this thesis operationalises theories of the middle range to see how the resettler stage is a process within which resettlers actively use spaces, are excluded and build solvency and local community capacity with socio-religious, human and linguistic resources.

Part 2 showed how the process of community and homemaking unfolds in resettlement. These findings contribute to migrant/settlement research by presenting alternative evidences of success within a group still struggling to meet benchmarks for literacy success, language and cultural retention (childrens' bi-lingual competency or literacy), employment, education completion and establishment of an independent church with ordained leaders. Findings invite a celebration of resettlers as significant community- and home-builders, and detail action as creating a cushion for culture shock, and as curating (local) social capital. These findings offer a recalibration to questions of resettlement 'success' to see how religion and ritual, cultural continuity, and resettlement processes contribute to resettler solvency. The findings contribute to understandings of these Karen by showing the significance of religious affiliation and participation can be in organising and settling migrant communities (cf Burrell 2006). While religion can be a source of strength and wellbeing for Karen resettlers (Borwick

et al 2013), this study articulates how religion is ‘embedded’ in the actual social structures that make social life possible (Turner 2009: 194). This expression of religiosity is not simply a privatised spirituality with the attendant erosion of community, but a set of practices with potential to build ‘new publics’ (Turner 2009: 196). The practical social supports and capitals generated within and beside this interaction space disturbs the dialog around the relevance of institutionalised religion in the face of new spiritualities and globalising forces (see Turner 2009). This study has uncovered the capacity for conviviality in diverse congregations, and the solvency or moral economic position and social capitals of religious resettlers.

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APPENDIX A:

Burma: a bloodied political history

This appendix gives an account of the political history in Burma, which is characterised by decades of civil war following WWII (see also Appendix B: BurmaLink (2015) conflict infographic). Mary Callahan argues Burma's political history can be presented as an unhelpful binary, with the military junta positioned as evil tyrant against the 'pro-democratic' and their leaders (including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi) and ethnic nationals as a force for good which is simplistic – opposition to the junta is not singular but arises from a range of interpretations which now includes non-NLD factions, transnational activists and global media voices (Callahan 2010). Callahan notes that 'media coverage of the domestic struggle between the junta and the NLD has constantly overshadowed the dilemma of Burma's ethnic minorities and armed insurgencies in the country's border areas' (2010: 17). Therefore, this account is placed in an appendix (references are listed above), but is provided to further contextualise the situation for ethnic minorities, especially Karens in Burma. As concerted and systematic efforts to displace them has threatened the Karen people and their culture with destruction, commentators agree the army offensives, government inaction and abuses amount to genocide (Rogers 2004: 203; Milbrandt 2012; The Guardian 2018). While commentaries, documentaries and biographies from the region focus on the civil war and rights abuses, the people of Burma, and those displaced and resettled from there, have complex lives that are not centrally characterised by war. Karens have variously been characterised as independent, fierce, and tough. I would add to this that Karens in resettlement can be groups that focus on practical matters, are pragmatic about the future, and can be very dedicated to their faith, family and community. This character was birthed out of a particular history, culture and political biography.

Burma was British Burma (1824-1948), a province of the British Raj until 1937 when it became a self-governing colony (Rogers 2004). Burma is rich in natural resources and was the second wealthiest South-East Asian nation under British administration, with the largest rice export, and rich resources of gemstones, crude oil and timber (see MacLean 2010). Power and wealth was concentrated among Europeans in Burma, but the population literacy rate and economic position was sound (Rogers 2004). During WWII, Burma was devastated by the occupying Japanese, and by the destruction of mines and government infrastructure by the British administration, which collapsed. Karen/Burman tensions flared as Bamar-

supported Japanese occupied Karen territory. The Karens, skilled in jungle warfare, waged the most successful guerrilla campaign against the Japanese, and provided the British soldiers with allegiance, information, hospitality and friendship (Rogers 2004: 22ff). Many ethnic nationals joined the British Burma Army, and soldiers and generals alike came to know of the Karen position in Burma, and were determined to help them petition for independence - but London was silent (Rogers 2004: 72). Karen loyalty was repaid by Japanese retaliation (Rogers 2004: 72), aided by the Burma Independence Army. In 1945, Japanese troops numbering 50, 000 retreated across the jungle, destroying rice supplies, intimidating, enslaving, torturing and killing Karen, including entire villages where all the men were killed, and women and children dead and alive were found stuffed down a well (Rogers 2004: 72, 74ff, 79).

After WWII, the already unhappy political relations between the ruling Burman and hill tribe peoples[60] precipitated internal war in Burma. No minorities (a word the Karen anecdotally hate) were included in the 1947 Aung-San-Atlee treaty negotiations, and the 'disastrous' constitution, negotiated by General Aung San with ethnic groups, left out any reference to Karen State (Rogers 2004: 84). The Burman Government moved quickly to crush the Karen, using arms shipped from Britain under then Prime Minister Atlee to suppress rebellion (Rogers 2004: 84ff). Karen congregations, meeting on Christmas eve, were slaughtered (Rogers 2004). As the constitution did not include the longed-for autonomy or self-government for Karen and other ethnic groups this was seen as a betrayal by the British, with whom the Karen had allied at great cost. Some Karen villagers accessed arms, however, from British soldiers who remained in the jungle, and confiscated Japanese weapons. The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) was formed. These outdated weapons, rusted and repaired with wire, are said to arm resistance groups in Burma to this day (Phan 2010).

At the Panglong Conference (1962), Bamar leader General Aung San and ethnic leaders negotiated for independence from Britain, establishing autonomy for Chin, Kachin and Shan peoples (see wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar). A transitional government was formed with Aung San as Deputy Chairman, but was quickly replaced by a military dictatorship when

[60] Inter-ethnic hostilities and war predate the incorporation of Rangoon and Southern Burma into British India in 1853. For example, massacres of Karen people at Myangma and Papun prompted an international call for political reform and separate administration to stave off a Karen uprising - as early as 1921 (Rogers 2004: 76-7).

political rivals assassinated Aung San and cabinet members just months later. The Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) seized power by military coup and arrested the elected Prime Minister, instating Ne Win as Prime Minister in a one-party state system (1962 - 1988). When protesters began to riot at Rangoon University troops sent to restore order a fired on the crowds and dynamited the Student Union building. The BSPP moved quickly to concentrate constitutional power with a small group of advisors and a military dictator, to nationalise the economy - diverting investment from industry and trade to agriculture. This was to result in persistent economic decline and military dominance over the next almost three decades. The first leader of the Karen independence army, Saw Ba U Gyi, sought a federal system and Karen independence (Rogers 2004: 31). But in the 1970s Burma's war office developed a counter-insurgency known as the 'four cuts' campaign - to cut off information, funding, and supplies of food and recruits from the Karen resistance. A new constitution is ratified in 1974 that further marginalised ethnic nationalities (Burma Link 2015).

By the 1980s Burma was listed among the world's Least Developed Countries (Rogers 2004: 9, 28), with the plunge into poverty attributed to austerity measures, military rule and the ineffective Burmese Way to Socialism under the rule of General Ne Win and the BSPP. Under the corrupt Socialist Way agrarian peoples were suffering severe hardships from reduced rice and timber prices and in 1984 a brutal Burma army offensive near the Thai border marked the beginning of ongoing refugee flows across the border (Burma Link 2015). The 1987 demonetarising of the *kyat* within Burma's cash-common economy left all but the elite leaders destitute, and wiped out tuition savings overnight, prompted a student-lead pro-democratic demonstration in Rangoon, on 8 August 1988 (the '8888 uprising'), that spread anti-BSPP protests and riots across the country (Callahan 2010). This was brutally suppressed by the regime; thousands were killed as military and security forces fired directly into the crowds (Burma Link 2015). Unprecedented numbers of Burmese were impacted by these events and many joined the KNU and formed their own force, the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF). Out in jungle checkpoints, these Burmese-speakers could cause fear and uncertainty among Karen travellers or those fleeing conflict who were unaware of their ranks among the resistance (Phan 2010: 267). The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), a dictatorship, took power. Domestic and international pressure forced the regime to hold a general election in 1990, which Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won with 82 percent of the seats (Phan 2010: 329).

The result was ignored and the new party did not participate in the creation of a new constitution (see Burma Link 2015, Rogers 2004: 26).

In 1991, still under house arrest, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But in the mid 90s, the Burma army campaign of forced relocations and village destruction became systematic (Rogers 2004: 26, 203; Burma Link 2015). Ceasefire agreements were signed with the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) and National Mon State Party (NMSP), but in 1996, six thousand Mon refugees were forcibly repatriated from Thailand and their IDP camp was attacked by the Burma army, with many attempting to flee back to Thailand (Burma Link 2015). These attacks continued and in 2002, Free Burma Rangers and armed relief team of missionaries, released photos of a massacre in Dooplayas district that

> shocked the international community… Overall five thousand people were displaced, six villages burned, five churches torched, fifteen villagers murdered including children…and over 1,000 people were in hiding in the jungle…Three pastors, Happy Htoo, See Pa Thru and Pareh were captured and tortured for five days outside their churches (Rogers 2004: 205).

In 2005, Karen refugee repatriation became a dim hope and the UNHCR began the world's largest resettlement program, relocating people from the TBB camps to third countries. By 2008, 30, 000 have been removed, most to America (Milwaukee, Denver, Syracuse and Minneapolis). Karen refugees reside in Finland (ABC 2013), and Ireland, Netherlands, Norway (Swe 2013), Sweden and the UK, and 3, 405 went to Australia (UNHCR.org). In 2008, when cyclone Nargis destroyed a large area of the Irrawaddy delta, killing 84, 000, the National Disaster Preparedness Committee, headed by Prime Minister General Thein Sein (2007-2011) actively blocked international aid from reaching people without water, shelter and food, and provided little internal relief (*The Guardian* 2008; Larkin 2010). A popular Burmese comedian who assisted later aid distributions, criticised the regime to the international press and was arrested and imprisoned for two years on changes of causing public unrest (*The Guardian* 2008). SLORC - renamed the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 2007 - developed the constitution over the 15 years to 2008, cementing the political clout of the military (Callahan 2010). Prime Minister Thein Sein (2007-2011), the junta's fourth in command, was re-elected as president in 2012, a direct contradiction to the new constitution of Myanmar (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thein_Sein).

The NLD is headed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who won a seat in parliament in 2012, and was elected to the Union Parliament in 2015. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is widely referred to as a nominal or de facto leader, alongside top general Min Aung Hlaing. The NLD party is considered to remain 'hamstrung by a military-drafted constitution that left the army in control of key security ministries and much of the apparatus of the state' (Reuters 2017). The nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA) is considered 'fragile' (ABC 2013), despite ongoing talks securing eight ethnic groups as signatories - the KNU, the Chin National Front, Pa-O National Liberation organisation, Arakan Liberation Party, All Burma Student Democratic Front, Democratic Karen Benevolent Army and the KNU/KNLA Peace Council (The Irrawaddy 2017c). Thai and Burmese generals agreed about refugee repatriation to Burma in 2014, but refugee movement remained restricted (Burma Link 2015). In the same year, military offensives saw 2, 000 Karen attempt to flee fighting to Thailand, with further offensives displacing 100, 000 over the next year (Burma Link 2015). Following a violent crackdown on student protesters, over 48 armed clashes between Karen and the Burma Army occurred in March 2015, the same month the draft nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA) was accepted. Ceasefire agreements continue to be broken in Karen State (Burma Link 2015) and do little to end political differences and allow the *Tatmadaw* to concentrate operations and more firmly establish power over enlarged territory (MacLean 2010). Military activity impacts essential services delivery to ethnic communities in eastern Burma, with villagers obliged to provide security for health workers who face violent and non-violent interference with their work (Footer et al 2014). Clashes between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in northwest Rakhine state in 2012 displaced 140, 000 villages, mostly Rohingya. From October 2016 tensions and inculcated hate escalated to an 'clearance operation' as army officials failed to negotiate with villages to hand over Rohingya militants[61] (Reuters 2017). Militants had attacked a border post and built a roadblock, and soldiers retaliated. Militants fought back, joined by villagers with knives and sticks, until the army brought in helicopters. Over the next two weeks, hundreds were shot and homes were set on fire and scores were brutalised and raped, 75 thousand fled north to other villages and west to Bangladesh. Over the months to January 2018 the numbers would swell to over 600 then over 870, 000

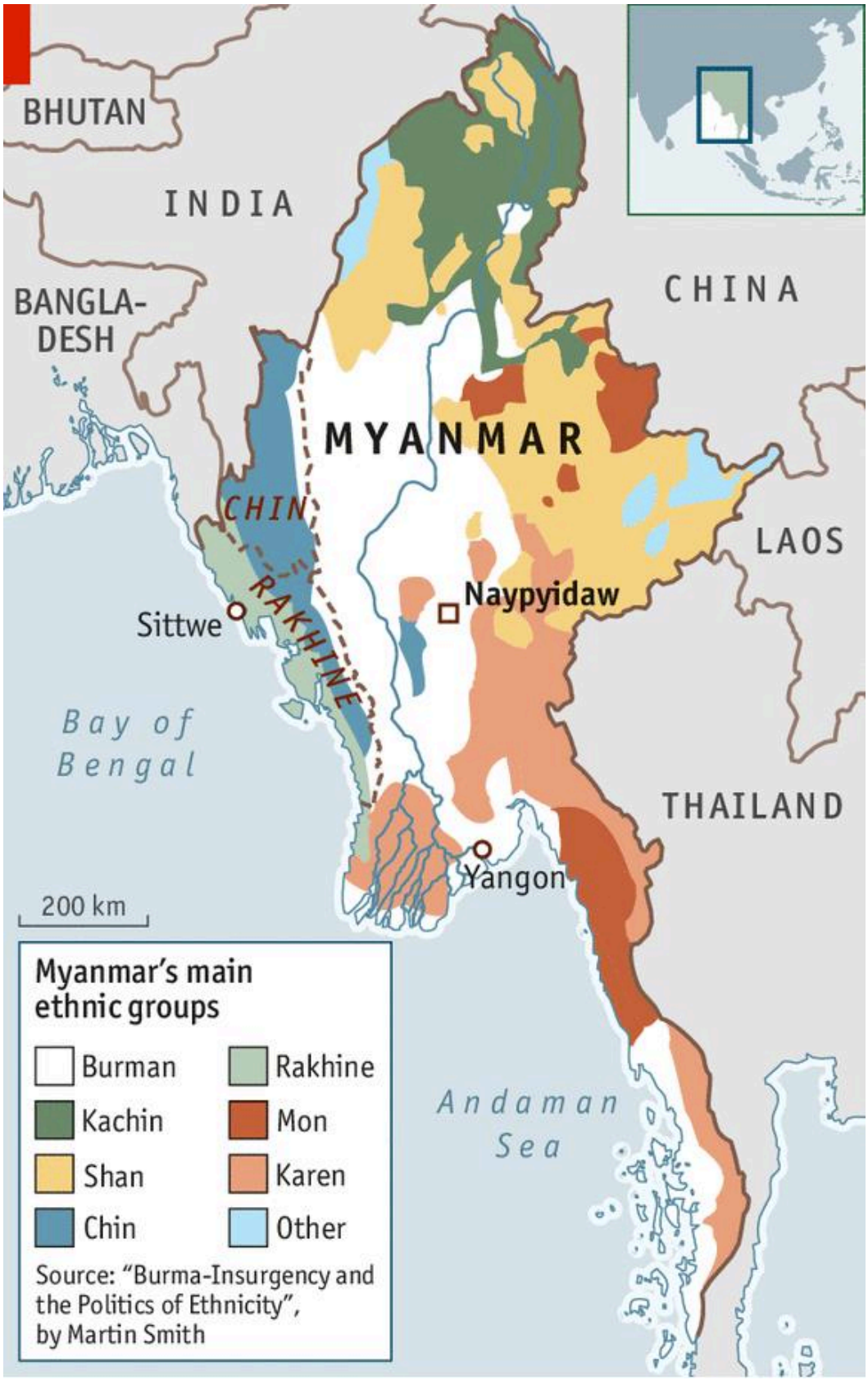
[61] These small insurgent groups formed after the 2012 attacks and as a reaction to ongoing persecution including from hard-line monks against Muslims in general and Rohingya specifically – education and propaganda since the army takeover in 1962 has positioned them as hated outsiders: extremists and illegal 'Bengali' labourers brought from Bangladesh by British colonisers prior to WWII (Los Angeles Times 2017; Beech 2017).

refugees, mostly women and children (Reuters 2018, The Guardian 2018).

Burma's first election in two decades was held in 2010. But despite Burma shifting to a nominally civilian government in 2011 (Burma Link 2015), there is only a passing waft of democracy as the military has only reluctantly loosened its grip on currency regulation, press censorship and the prohibition of unions and strikes, and allows international officials to visit and monitor the voting process. The military drafted constitution allows the junta to retain parliamentary seats, appoint leaders, and remain independent of civilian oversight (Roberts 2004' Amnesty International 2017). Amnesty International has characterised human rights violations in Burma - largely the persecution of ethnic nationalities - as 'widespread and systematic' (2011, see also The Irrawaddy 2017c). The human rights situation in Burma has not resolved with regard to political prisoners, and despite the NCA, armed conflicts continue between the Burma Army and ethnic nationals (Amnesty International 2017). Ethnic groups, historically self-reliant, continue in that stance as hopes fade that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the icon of the democratic struggle, will be able to effect dramatic change. The endemic violence from Burma security forces, especially sexual violence, signals not only the violation of human rights but is a sign of weak command structures (also linked to forced recruitment), ineffective law enforcement and peace promotion (Washington Post 2018). These actions of the junta undermine citizens trust, increase instability and refugee flows and human and economic costs, and interrupt later reconciliation and community formation (Washington Post 2018). Humanitarian organisations are calling for the international community to impose or retain sanctions against Myanmar's military-controlled economy but officials have not acted to exert pressure on that government (Washington Post 2018, The Guardian 2018), and this is unlikely to help in Burma's case as neighbouring and global powers have mixed interests in the country (and refuse the sanctions), democracy is not inevitable and neither 'universal revulsion', damaged reputation, fractured oppositions, or economic crisis is likely to undermine the military leadership structure (Callahan 2010). Furthermore, the mix of global sanctions and trades have prompted a militarised economic development 'turn', where control established in resource–rich, former insurgent areas has been decentralised to field battalions required to 'self-fund' take ownership of mines and other operations, drive out, extort or enslave local villagers (MacLean 2010).

The few signs of hope for Burma's people and economy is the relaxing of migration laws, more transport options giving the poor options to move, work and send remittances home to

improve their situation, and more widespread knowledge of rights abuses through on-the ground humanitarian observers, mobile coverage, international media coverage (and domestic access to media), which allows people some ability to guess at the de facto rules of the political game in order to stay off the state radar and survive (see Callahan 2010). Resettlement offers opportunities for further education, work, and family reunion that are not possible in many refugee camps. Resettlement may be taken on as a last resort or only way forward, a personal change and challenge, in obedience to God or other family members, and as a mission field. While some Karen youth in America have formed gun-toting gangs (see Portes and Xhou 1993, cited in Gilhooly and Lee 2017; cf Deuchar 2011), mostly the history of resettled Karens remains only their culture; clothing, language, collective memories, memorials and habits, blue tattoos.



Results from the politically inflammatory 2014 census shows the (contested) delineation of ethnic groups in Burma (Myanmar). Ongoing armed conflict, large-scale displacement and remote hill-tribe villages added challenges to the first attempt to count the population since 1983 (The Economist, 22 March 2014).

NB: Other maps have Karen as 'Kayin' and Karenni as 'Kayah' (using Burmese)

BURMA LINK

INTERNAL CONFLICT IN BURMA

The Time is NOT RIGHT

for Thailand-Burma Border Refugee Return

"I don't think you really need to return refugees back because if conditions were right, the refugees would go back of their own free will."

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, 2012

THE MAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE OF CONCERN

▲ 10 000

RESIDING in Burma

662,400 Internally Displaced Persons[2] (IDP)

400,000
IDPs IN SOUTH-EAST

ORIGINATING from Burma

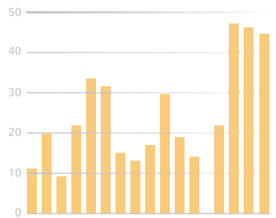
479,706 Refugees[1]

48,053 Asylum Seekers[1]

409 Various[1]

1 Returned Refugee[1]

110,637
REFUGEES IN 9 CAMPS ON THE THAILAND-BURMA BORDER[3]



CONFLICTS[4]

1 2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile - Myanmar
www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4877d6.html

2 The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/myanmar/

3 The Border Consortium
www.theborderconsortium.org/media/59439/2015-03-mar-map-tbc-unhcr.pdf

4 Myanmar Peace Monitor
www.mmpeacemonitor.org/research/monitoring-archive

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.burmalink.org

Briefing paper by Burma Link and Burma Partnership
Voices of Refugees - Situation of Burma's Refugees Along the Thailand-Burma Border

The Longest Running Civil War in the World

1947 PANGLONG CONFERENCE
1948 BURMA BECOMES INDEPENDENT FROM BRITAIN
1949 INTERNAL WAR - THE KNLA TAKES UP ARMS AFTER FAILING TO REACH A POLITICAL AGREEMENT.
1961 THE KIA TAKES UP ARMS
1962 MILITARY COUP
1974 NEW CONSTITUTION THAT FURTHER MARGINALISES ETHNIC NATIONALITIES
1984 A BRUTAL BURMA ARMY OFFENSIVE NEAR THE THAI BORDER, THE BEGINNING OF THE ONGOING REFUGEE OUTFLOW FROM BURMA INTO THAILAND
1988 THE 8888 UPRISING. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE KILLED BY THE MILITARY AND THE POLICE
1989 MARTIAL LAW AND THOUSANDS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ARRESTED
1990 NLD WINS THE GENERAL ELECTION, BUT THE RESULT IS IGNORED
1991 DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI WINS THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
1994 CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT WITH THE KIO
1995 CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT WITH THE NMSP
1996 6,000 MON REFUGEES FORCIBLY REPATRIATED FROM THAILAND TO BURMA. THE BURMA ARMY ATTACKS THEIR IDP CAMP AND MANY ATTEMPT TO FLEE BACK TO THAILAND
2003 THE KNLU AND GOVERNMENT SIGN THE 'GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT', BUT BURMA ARMY CONTINUES MILITARY OFFENSIVES
2007 SAFFRON REVOLUTION
2008 NEW CONSTITUTION FAILS TO GUARANTEE ETHNIC NATIONALITY RIGHTS
2010 THE MILITARY-BACKED USDP WINS THE 2010 ELECTION, CONDEMNED AS A SHAM
2011 A NOMINALLY CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT TAKES OVER, CONFLICTS BREAK OUT.
2012 PRELIMINARY CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE KNU AND THE GOVERNMENT. DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI WINS A SEAT IN THE PARLIAMENT
2013 RATIONS CUT IN REFUGEE CAMPS
2014 THAI AND BURMESE GENERALS AGREE ABOUT REFUGEES RETURN TO BURMA, RESTRICTIONS ON REFUGEES MOVEMENT, 2,000 KAREN ATTEMPT TO FLEE FIGHTING TO THAILAND
2015 FEBRUARY: VIOLENT CRACKDOWN ON STUDENT PROTESTERS, BURMESE MILITARY OFFENSIVES DISPLACE 100,000 PEOPLE
2015 MARCH: TEXT ON DRAFT NATIONWIDE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT (NCA) AGREED, 48 ARMED CLASHES
2015-2017: THE UNHCR HAS DEVELOPED STRATEGIES FOR REPATRIATION, LOCAL CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION SHARING LACKING

1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010

1989-1995 2000-2002 2003-2010 DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI UNDER HOUSE ARREST

CYCLONE NARGIS

KIA = Kachin Independence Army **KIO** = Kachin Independence Organization **KNLA** = Karen National Liberation Army **KNU** = Karen National Union **NLD** = National League for Democracy **NMSP** = National Mon State Party **UNHCR** = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees **USDP** = Union Solidarity and Development Party

Background

Burma is home to the longest-running civil war in the world and a brutal, powerful military that continues to abuse its own people in a culture of impunity. While the prevailing narrative is that Burma has set off on a road to reform, the process is increasingly rocky, leading to the Special Rapporteur on human rights situation in Burma to observe a "backsliding" in the reform process.

There are currently over **110,000 refugees** residing in the Thailand-Burma border camps and more than **600,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs)** living in Burma. Despite Burma's opening up in recent years, very few displaced people have spontaneously returned home.

Some of the fiercest conflict has taken place in eastern Burma, and hundreds of thousands have fled to neighbouring Thailand. Most of them belong to Karen ethnic group. The initial ceasefire signed between the Burma Army and the Karen National Union (KNU) in January 2012, has given a **misleading image that peace is within reach, fuelling the discussion of refugee return**. Meanwhile, large scale offensives in northern Burma and increasing militarization in ceasefire areas have also called into question the government's commitment to peace. Initial ceasefires have proven to be fragile and regularly breached, political dialogue is yet to begin, and Burma is still far from achieving the signing of the much-touted nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA).

The relapse of progress in building a sustainable, democratic country deeply affects Burma's refugees who worry about having to return to their homeland. In the camps, **reductions in aid coupled with restrictions in movement are now threatening refugees' livelihoods,** potentially leading to a form of constructive refoulement.

Refugee return must be truly voluntary and based on durable solutions that are in line with international human rights standards and humanitarian laws that ensure their safety and dignity. The timing for refugee return will not be right until the conditions which have led the refugees to flee Burma over the past 30 years are resolved. If Burma hopes to achieve a genuine sustainable peace, **it is essential that the voices of refugees are heard and their rights are recognized and respected.**

The timing is not right for refugee return.

If refugees' concerns are unresolved and the preconditions for sustainable return are not ensured, the refugees will again be caught in a cycle of conflict and displacement, only to end up as IDPs upon their return.

VOICES OF REFUGEES

Majority of the refugees residing in refugee camps along the Thailand-Burma border were forced to abandon their homes and villages due to direct or indirect consequences of conflict in ethnic areas. Some fled in fear after family members were killed, served as porters, tortured, and/or raped during conflict and many relocated as a result of the Burma Army decimating their homes and villages.

"As soon as we got out, our houses were burned." 1

"We always had to run away. I could not go to school, and my heart was always filled with fears." 2

One Karen refugee arrived to Mae La camp in 2010 after her village was burnt and she had witnessed fellow villagers being killed by the Burma Army, including a pregnant woman. She describes her journey from Burma to Thailand:

"On the way we walked, we had to be afraid of the landmines. We just followed other people. I came with about 30 people. Some stepped on the landmine and died. I saw two boys and one girl who stepped on a landmine and died. We walked with fear and we could go through the forest and we got to the border. We can say that we were so lucky at the time." 1

Ongoing Conflict

War still rages on in northern Burma, and sustainable peace is yet nowhere in sight.

"There is still conflict with the ethnic groups. Especially in Kachin State, they are sending a lot of troops I heard. […] Their (Burma Army's) strategy is fighting the groups one by one. In my opinion, after the Kachin, I'm not so sure if they will attack the Karen. I'm not so sure. You can consider it you know […] I don't think Burma has changed." 3

BURMA LINK

Calling for all parties to uphold the voices and rights of the refugees

#WorldRefugeeDay, June 20, 2015

Burma's refugees along the Thailand-Burma border

Stand in solidarity with

BURMA LINK

www.burmalink.org

"In the light of the current fragile peace process and the unfavorable situation on the ground in Burma, any repatriation taking place under the current circumstance is likely to lead to involuntary return, either directly or indirectly through cutting off aid."

Ariana Zarleen, the Co-founder and current Program Director of Burma Link

www.burmalink.org

"Repatriation should be a refugee-led voluntary operation since they are the primary stakeholders, and not enforced by actions and factors determined by others. Meaningful and inclusive participation of refugees in the decision making of the return process is the key to their sustainable return, and refugees should be provided ample space and time to make their decision regarding their future."

Soe Aung, Working Group member of Burma Partnership and Foreign Affairs Secretary of Forum for Democracy in Burma

www.burmapartnership.org

See Karen Women Organisation's statement on June 20 2015 for recommendations to the Burma Government international governments, the UNHCR. and all relevant parties.

WHAT ELSE DO THE REFUGEES SAY?

***"The refugees are not included in the decision-making process"* 7**

"I don't believe any information from the camp" 2

"I have one question to them (UNHCR and the authorities) is the future is in our own hands or is the future is in your hands? To my understanding, our future must be in our own hands so that we can use our capabilities to achieve something we dream about." 5

"We will be in a lot of trouble when the camp is shut down […] going back to Burma would be a disaster for us." 5

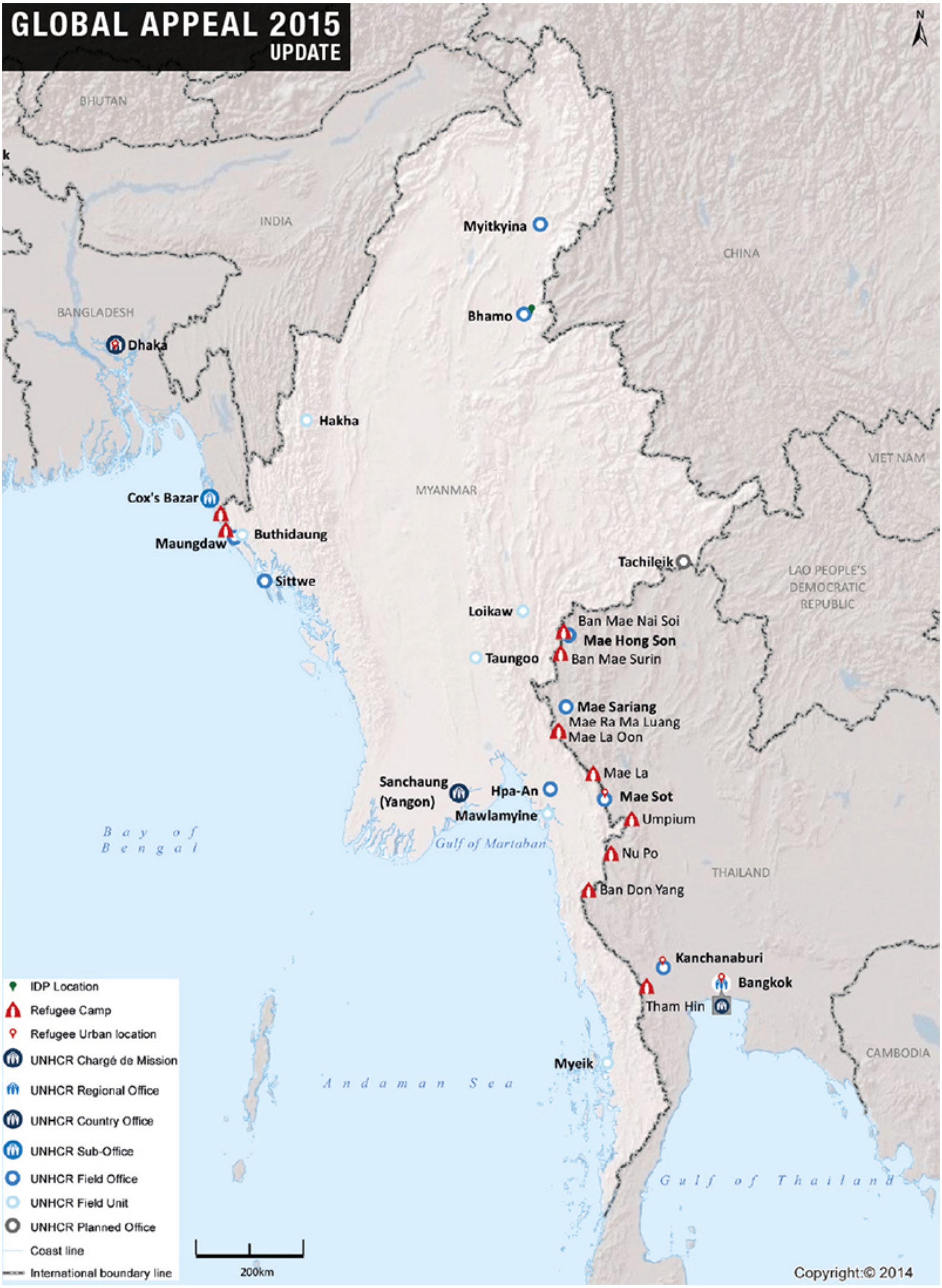
"Oh my… the government, the citizens, the country themselves are not stable and not making any progresses so why repatriate us?? I am wondering whether they are trying to kill us? Yes, I'm very much worried about the repatriation plan!" 6

There is a rising concern within the refugee community that the situation on the ground indicates a direction towards premature repatriation.

For more voices and information, read the briefing paper by Burma Partnership and Burma Link: Voices of Refugees - situation of Burma refugees along the Thailand-Burma border.

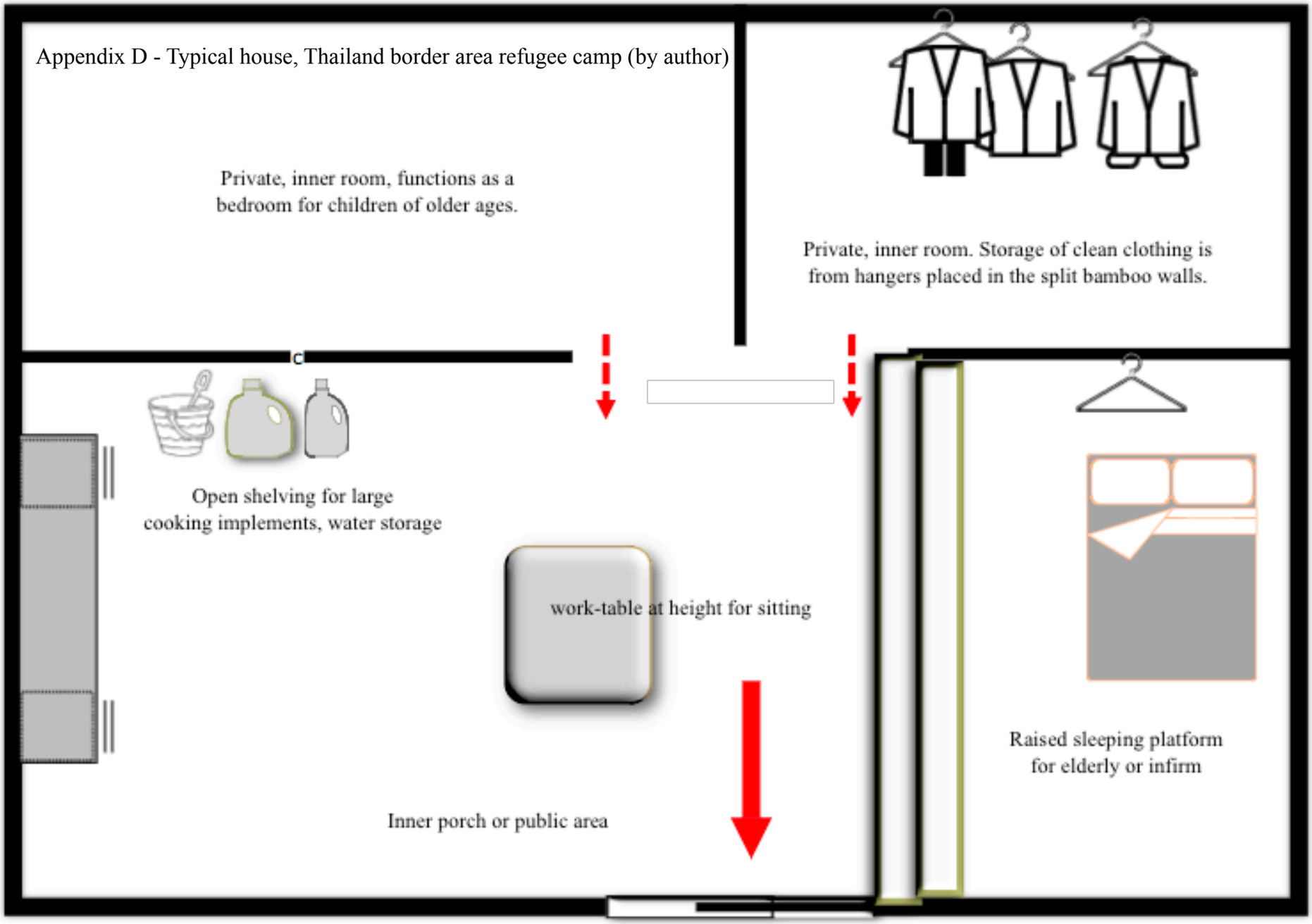
1 Karen female in Mae La, interviewed in January 2015
2 Karenni male in Ban Mai Nai Soi, interviewed in March 2015
3 Karen male in Mae La, interviewed in February 2015
4 Karen male in Mae La, interviewed in February 2015
5 Karenni male in Mae La Oon, interviewed in February 2015
6 Shan/Karenni female in Mae La, interviewed in January 2015
7 Karenni male in Ban Mai Nai Soi, interviewed in March 2015

Appendix C - Thailand-Burma Border area refugee and IDP camp location map

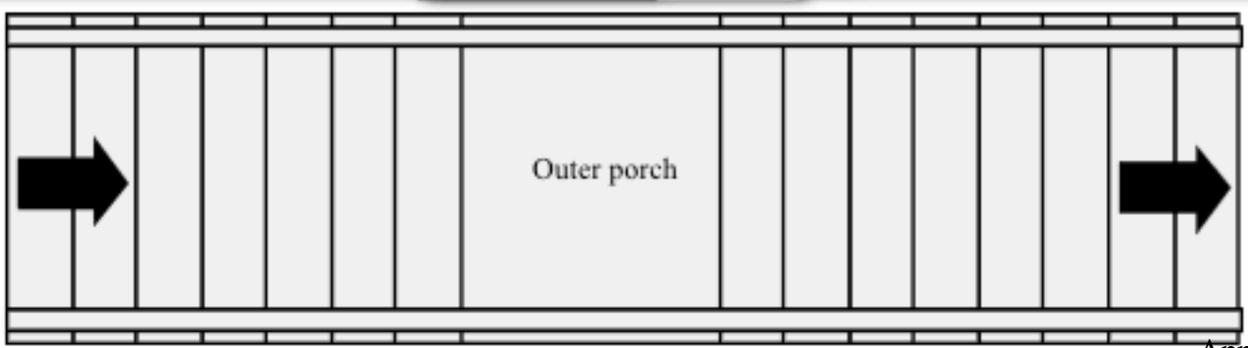


http://www.unhcr.org/images/operationsMaps/country-mmr.jpg

Appendix D - Typical house, Thailand border area refugee camp (by author)



Open area under the house contains rubbish, sometimes rice stores and water barrels. The area is often used for burning rubbish and perhaps cooking, or hanging bags upon which grow mushrooms. Some homes have a toilet located underneath and some house a large tethered pig.



Plan of Karen house-on-stilts. Based on authors visit to Mae La refugee camp (Thai-Burma border, 2013). See also Rajah's (2008:91) plan of Palokhi Karen home (Thailand).

IELTS™

IELTS 9-band scale

9	Expert user	Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
8	Very good user	Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
7	Good user	Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
6	Competent user	Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
5	Modest user	Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
4	Limited user	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
3	Extremely limited user	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
2	Intermittent user	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
1	Non user	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.
0	Did not attempt the test	No assessable information provided.

BRITISH COUNCIL idp IELTS AUSTRALIA UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE ESOL Examinations

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A VISUAL OF MIGRATION: A KAREN STORY

1. Born 1944 in Karen State, Burma

Pi (grandmother) Wah Lay was born during WWII when the Karen were instrumental in helping the Brits defeat the Japs. Her name means white rags in Karen language. This refers to her mother's experience of making new clothing for six children prior to Pi's conception. All of these children were miscarriages so her mother just prepared some plain scraps into clothing for her, and she lived. Pi resided in Burma 45 years and bore 9 children to her husband Hto Nee. Hto Nee's mother intended to call him 'tonight' but Karen languages have no consonant endings. The name was closer to the English to Tony, so he has adopted that in Australia. These kinds of name changes due to spelling, Thai, Burmese and English language differences and approximations are common among the resettled Karen.

2. Internal displacement 1988

Civil war and ethnic cleansing meant there was a 'problem' in the countryside of Burma. People left everything to run to the jungle from the Burmese army. Wah Lay and her family were displaced for 10 years, and separated from her children who fled to Tham Hin camp to the South West of the Thai-Burma border (TBB). Although they travelled to this camp, the armed Thai guards refused them entry. Increasing military control and recent threats to close the camps characterise the Thai government's control of these camps.

3. Refugee camp

From 1999 she resided in Ban Don Yang camp (West TBB) with husband Hto Nee. Hto Nee was enamored by the idea of Australia and applied for a humanitarian entrance there when offered. Many Karen see resetting to a third country as the only way forward - they mostly seek resettlement in America but are not able to choose. Wah Lay did not want to move away from her nine children (six living) and numerous grandchildren in Burma. She was saddened but prayed to God to change her heart towards the move. It took a year to be approved which Wah Lay said was 'very quick'.

4. Resettlement to Tasmania

Wah Lay and Hto Nee arrived in 2009. Their two daughters in-law followed in 2013 and 2014, having both lost husbands to war, displacement or in the camp. Hto Nee's heart was very bad and had caused him ten years of breathing problems. He received life-saving heart surgery 3 months after arriving in Australia. Wah Lays eldest daughter remarried a resettled Karen man and has a baby son. Her husband is one of few who work full time - he supports Pi Wah Lay and Pu Hto Nee in their household which also includes two young adults from their elder daughter's first marriage, and two children from their younger daughter in-law. Pi Wah Lay's new grandson has put a deposit on a home for the family and they are looking forward to more room for the young adults to marry and have families of their own.

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REBEKAH BURGESS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

This visual is based on a tripline, used to chart personal and historical journeys on a world map. I used this tripline to contextualise a single resettlement experience, and to make a 'location' from which to explore narrations of identity. While this shows the life of one grandmother, the story of her children and people is enfolded throughout the narrative. Like many 'shared' stories, this story was not told in a linear way, nor by one person, nor only using words. This story is the result of over a year of observing, listening, reading, talking, translations and language-sharing over family meals and community gatherings.

BURMA | DISPLACED | CAMP | TASMANIA

A VISUAL MAP OF MIGRATION:
A KAREN FAMILY RESETTLEMENT STORY

PHOTO CREDIT: Prweb 2015 http://ww1.prweb.com/prfiles/2008/04/24/111343/DSC00139.JPG

PI WAH LAY

Pi Wah Lay was born in Burma in 1944, during the first world war.
She was displaced and separated from her extensive family by violent civil war which began in earnest in 1988.
Karen people and other ethnic minorities were the target for the Burmese military force.
Displaced for 10 years, they tried to reunite with family in another refugee camp but were refused by the Thai guards.
They lived apart from them for eight years in separate camps.
She wanted to stay in Burma, but came to Australia with her husband in August 2009.

PH HTO NEE

Born 1942, Pu Hto Nee shares a similar migration journey to his wife.
He applied for resettlement and received life-saving heart surgery soon after arriving.
He is 73 and can sit cross-legged on the floor for many hours without complaint.

PO NAW

Born in 1972, Po Naw is in her 40s and has one young adult child and two young children.
She lived 21 years in Burma where she had a husband and one child.
She trained there or in a refugee camp as a pastor and is very literate in Karen, but learning English has taken time with a large family of children.

GAW SHA

Gaw Sha's mother could not afford to send him to school so he hearded goats in Burma until there was a 'problem' in the country and he ran into the jungle. Gaw Sha was in a camp on the Burma side but the fighting got too close and they fled again to a large camp on the Thai side of the border.
He has been in Australia 5 years and has a permanent job, speaks English enthusiastically, is buying a home and has a drivers licence.

NAW NAW

Born 1986, Naw Naw was displaced in the Burmese jungle from the time she was 13 to the time she was 22.
She spent a further 10 years in a refugee camp before relocating to Australia 5 years ago without her husband who was lost somewhere along the journey. She has two daughters in primary school.

THA KU

Born in 1991, Tha Ku lived only one year in Burma before being taken to a refugee camp with his parents, Tha Ku was educated in Burmese, Thai and Karen languages before relocating to Tasmania. He speaks English infrequently but well.

PAW EH

Born 2010 Paw Eh speaks Karen language but can not write.
He is too shy to respond in English but soon will do so like his older siblings and cousins.
His parents proudly describe him as 'born in Australia', and Karen mothers want to learn English to help with their children's homework.

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This 'migratogram' represents the migration experiences of seven different people in one extended family*. This visual aims to depict generational variety in experiences of war in Burma, displacement and resettlement. While each person appears as a 'whole' story, these narrations were collected as speech fragments. These fragments consisted of comments and reminiscence in S'gaw Karen and translated for me, told to me in English, or passed to me by others in and around the Hobart community. The experiences, and the stories of resettlement are thus 'shared' in complex ways.

*Names and details have been changed.

BURMA | DISPLACED | CAMP | TASMANIA

Practical report & thoughts on Karen resettlers for TFC members 7 March 2018

Karens in this space

My question was how are *these* Karen settling, and why do they stay in *this* State. Because of time I don't look at the State, I look at this space, TFC. And I won't cover refugee status & journeys – these maps and timeline show the conflict [see Appendix A]. War and trauma is real but not priority tonight - and its not for Karens right now either. Rather, these Karens are busy resettling: they are actively home-making, gathering with family and community to pray, preach the gospel; they DO family and practical tasks. They're in a get on with it phase.

Eg: Post WWII, another anthropologist, Herbert Gans observed that while first generation Jews in America had all seen 'unspeakable' things in the holocaust; they weren't speaking! They just got on with community building; that's what I'm seeing with these Karens.

I've been participating & observing over four years with this PhD research. These are MY interpretations, I'm not a spokesperson for the Karen community. I'm an Academic and Ally: I want to bring encouragement and exhort you about *this* space: and share broader ideas too.

SO much practical help has happened: there's Freedom to come and go here. The church is Friendly/Familiar and help and welcome has been done in Solid & Symbolic ways.

The local is where life happens – and for Karens all over Australia, church is the hub of community life across the 3 services – 10am, Karen-speaking, and Sunday House-services (even for those not Christian: several Karens in Tasmania are not Baptist or not Christians).

Broader context

Australia is a migrant nation, we are doing WELL socially. We don't have the enclaves and riots of London. Migrants fill and found our churches – now, this is a better reflection of global Christianity which is no longer a 'White/Western' dominated faith.

In Australia refugees are 1 person per 1 thousand (so we've really a lot of resources for these few). OS born, those with parents OS born OS are now a majority in our nation. Tasmania has only 18% (mostly European) - only 4% speak LOTE at home. No minority is over 1% (2.2% are from different parts of Asia) so groups are small. Even Hmong (a community of 600 at their peak), Vietnamese, El Salvadorian, Bosnian/Africans Humanitarian Entrants have left - in hope of farms/work interstate: this fragments communities and is often a further 'forced' migration: for a refugee, being able to stay is a luxury: they have history and hopes here but are unwilling to be dependent and need work.

Australian Karens in about 27 different locations; urban and rural resettlements differ:

Urban: good access to language classes, formal services, work, transport. But work and schooling can create intergenerational differences (youth lose culture/ respect) and strife. Karens in America are among the urban poor, youth are joining gangs, carrying guns...

Rural: more familiar/similar living for people with agricultural background (villages in Burma have maybe 20-30 families); the culture loss is slower. This means better family

and community unity (not as many in work/school or slow to get work so more time to parent children and pass on culture - this means better intergenerational communication and control of children's behaviour). But there are fewer formal resources, like language classes, multicultural football teams or sewing groups and so on (some regional areas are doing better than suburban and rural on this front). Smaller numbers can be settled in rural areas due to the lack of formal services but this means fewer Karens do the helping and community work, fewer Karens as potential spouses and so on. Secondary migration for work is common – young men have moved from here to outer Perth/ Metro Melbourne to get meatwork jobs: this can drain resources/potential spouses from Tas (and has; 100 left).

Tasmania is close to the rural situation: Vee Too came here ten years ago, but 19ppl came in the last few months: four single mums with four children each. So many are still really new. There are about 150 people in 37 households (average 4 but up to 13 in one house). About 100 have left Tasmania but a few moved back! *Hows it going for Tasmanian Karens?*

eg: Sydney Karens started arriving in the 80s so: different group/location/resources.

The story of this space This space we have is central and offers A LOT to Karens: We have a SPACE here for the group to come and participate in real ways. Churches do lots. Churches & Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) fill gaps in formal services for refugees (which end after 12 months, and end if people move away, even for work). Churches provide for <u>social and spiritual needs</u>, while these are missing from government/NGO work (especially if these are secular) at each and every stage of refugee journey: in war, during flight (displacement), camp life, and resettlement (especially to secular countries).

So, what has been happening at Church I can encourage and exhort you about:

- SOLID assistance w transport, access to MRC, housing/furniture/ paperwork, IT.. If I can say anything with confidence it's a huge Thank You from grateful Karens on this.
- SYMBOLIC: Turning up at church for handshakes and hugs with locals might seem like a 'token' - but its still 'recognition'. This may be *the only recognition* they receive from the community: many are at-home mums or not participating in work and school (in three generations they will be *more* likely to be participating than average Australian). AND we pray with/for them, join/do mission: each means a LOT

Let's look at this space from the perspective of a Karen life:

<u>You come to a new nation and culture: you are as dependent as newborn (again) – this would be confronting for your pride/ sense of identity! Maybe you were educated, a pastor etc…</u>

- Karens come from tight knit villages to sprawling camps, to knowing no one, maybe being 'no-one' and not understanding anything or how to help yourself:
    - BUT Churches have religious rituals = these are 'rhythms of sociality'. These are meaningful, even to the newest arrival from camp – there is something familiar going on. <u>For a new arrival, the English service is sort of familiar – Singing together, prayer, bible reading. And the Karen-house</u>

meeting is perhaps THE ONLY familiar thing. For refuges, their own people (and rituals) 'cushion' culture shock for fragile newcomers.

- Its hard to 'connect/communicate' when you don't get the accent, customs, culture, English & what's polite. So Karens are shy/hang back.
    - BUT Its nice to know & be known in the community, have a non-verbal greeting: or someone will try a 'Wallah Ghay' (good morning). When you are a visitor; don't you wait for a host to say 'come in'. Don't you look for cues from them as host before you 'help yourself'?
- Your cultural ways are only known to a few people, you soon realise your language will die as the children need English, there are not enough resources to teach Sgaw, and everything around is in English (assimilation will happen)
    - BUT this church is a SPACE, and it can become a place to show your culture (dress, a little of the language and food) and a place to have *the only ways you've ever known* continue –AND cultural things can be celebrated and affirmed (maybe even survive, which is a win for everyone as diverse systems are more sustainable).

Refugees are 1%, and handpicked for Australia's Humanitarian visa quotas, but are still excluded from "civic participation" in ways we will never experience:

- Lack of English excludes a mother from voting and travelling to Burma – she has been here 5 years and we work together every week on English: lately to pass the Citizenship test: One question from the test:

'Law enforcement falls under which type of governing power':

- executive, - legislative, - judicial, - or none the above. Tricky question!

Its level 5 English. After 4 years she's level 2, 'upper beginner' (see IELTS scale 'intermittent user' Appendix B – I'm L2/3 Karen also). But no Citizenship means no passport - no mission trip - no camp visit – no travelling to Burma even if a family member dies.

- BUT this mother can participate in Church: take on a role as greeter, pray for children, give out communion, give to the offering and sing:
- Karens are contributing and really faithful when many Australians are leaving our churches (we are not alone, many clubs are dying too)!
- Plus Karens have official roles teaching, preaching, secretarial roles in their own service (plus informal economy in veg and Asian-toned makeup)

Karens have quickly moved to independence (with transport, housing), and dislike airing problems. Perhaps this is about the 'impotence/ incompetence' they feel as newcomers. They like to fix their own family problems rather than burden Australians who they see as generous (and whose lives and priorities they may not yet understand). This can mean Karens miss out on help/don't ask/don't tell (of trauma) until they can trust. And they are not problem-free:

1. Australia's freedoms & expectations (eg we forbid hitting children) creates parental crisis

- Parents face problems as children are suddenly (apparently) 'free to associate between genders'. They are told not to hit children but are offered no alternative punishment = unruly kids (not listen) unsupervised teens (form Karen gangs U.S.)
    - BUT all welcome in church. Church is a RARE space in Australia as its: A: a family-friendly space. And B: not a commercial space but FREE/open
    - Karen pastors are caring for single and teenage mums: they care for them all including the wayward (and non-Christians); they know the lives of the people in their community and are IN them as true pastors PN preaches the gospel, ML even preaches on s-e-x.

2. <u>Tasmanian Karen have low English, and mixed literacy / prior education in own language</u>
    - Will have difficulty navigating RACT policy: can't call and negotiate to increase their cars' 'agreed value' to match the buying price like we would
    - sermons, radio and TV have little meaning – listening for many adults is not learning, its drowning. (I do this in Karen service too. I have to learn)
    - Literacy in Sgaw determines participation in Karen church too, in the youth group, and in the choir – you must read and write to be able to preach/sing. Some younger teens don't read and write Sgaw so drop out.
    - BUT you don't need English to take up the offering or clean the church; and some roles @ Combined service need Sgaw – its not a language 'needed in Australia'. Its not 'needed' at 10am: but no English = no problem for some roles. And suddenly @ Combined your heart language has *value*. In learning Sgaw I not only converse I communicate *worth*

What then can we do? Seek first to understand

- NOW, these Karens are in establishment phase; 'community building'. Pragmatic.
- Not doing 'self-actualisation' or 'identity work': they express their culture because its instrumental, their *nii* (sarong) is what they have and it's a useful familiar garment
- They aren't stating 'big goals' yet; are busy 'place-making'. Are active home-makers.
- Much is done by a FEW: Karen leaders do up to 4 nights a week driving lessons. Not only youth (with 2 parents and 2 cars) needing driving lessons: there are 'no-breadwinner households'- single mums need car, driver, and childcare available
- SO: Lots of practical work happening, and some chaos! Australia offers freedom and enough to eat: no wonder its a loud party/maybe mistakes/ confusion/ shock

All this and in Australia the talk is of expecting '*migrants* to integrate'?? Surely it is this [two hands move together]. A focus on migrants 'adapting' and 'their needs' is necessary. But its a problem if we assume *they* are passive - or that *we* can be passive.

SO for their part: lets not ignore the work of *very* active resettlers.
On our part: lets not ignore that integration work must be two-way

We have the local resources, know-how – even how to be polite: can we pass on these 'ways' by example (let people into our homes /lives – they don't know our lives. A mum (6 years here) asked the other day 'how often do you shower?. People need fish, its good to give but also *see them fishing,* (show them our fishing), and buy and trade different fish with them.

HOW-TO: Don't dismiss the Small (Solid social assistance) NOR the Symbolic recognitions:

- Nod and smile: means I see you, we're familiar– potential to meet – know – trust
- Real relationships can develop from here. Where there is someone who can access the host culture for you, Karens will see our lives as we see theirs (be a 'bridge' across)
- Little cultural tip: *la pa ti dor deh* sit and have tea: it builds relations. If refugees are 1 in a thousand, imagine if one in a thousand Australians decided to be a friend to one family. We would be helping 'the poor', and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ!
- NOT just about US (host) helping THEM (guests)– they're active hosts and home makers: go see - value - enjoy their hospitality, contribution, faith! We recognise: now lets relate – to enter into exchanges (relations) is to give dignity and worth
- I 'exchange' *language* with Karens – others exchange farm work or gardening for money, or take turns to eat together. Because I bring English into homes and 'take' Sgaw from them I give my language, and value theirs. Others will do different exchanges. These exchanges have built trust over time – this is beyond price for them to Know and Be Known – and they can ask me when they need help with Telstra and keep their dignity because they are giving back by feeding me and kissing me and giving me vegetables and praying for me and bragging about my terrible Sgaw.

TAKE AWAYS:

- Lets celebrate together the gift of this space. What a legacy. Karens can participate and mix: they've found freedom and food and family after so much that has fragmented their community. They are many on the margins of our society / economy but have found extra sociality here. Doing church is a familiar thing. A similar-within-the strange. Lets keep possibilities open.
- Its still early days: it may be noisy 'dirty' crowded; time and relationships will allow gentle exchange of culture and what's polite - K are horrified to offend!
- There are 'discomforts' for us - but exclusions for them – get to know these (can be individual or different in each family). What 'fishing' are they doing that we can use/learn from/value, and what 'fishing' do we do that we can share (parenting tips?).
- Lets beware of only seeing problems, or papering over problems just looking at 'lovely local diversity'. If we are only a 'mosaic', each in their own separate community with no exchange: is fake integration. Early integration work will be 'practical problem-solving': lets see this as an easy way to give and build trust while the community is new, as soon, we may not need each other so much and times will change. We need to work with those from the global south, to win the global south for Christ; these are the youth of Australia.
- Resettlement is slow; exchanges and integration will be too: so build in time, sit with the discomfort of not being able to 'speak' English – keep it simple, light, practical, and remember to be flexible to the individual and culture as ways of life are fluid, not fixed (eg: they may drop their culture of avoiding eye contact and take on ours, or may not be aware of either culture yet!).

QUESTION TIME

Further resources

HOW TO RELATE ONE ON ONE:

- Use courtesy carefully, in accordance with someones age and use body language (not over the top). Its often ok to say 'auntie' or 'brother' (English).
- Recognition can be small: a nod, a smile. Ask children about school, others about gardens and cooking and upcoming weddings, travel & church plans.
- Use visual humour! Humour and laughter is so welcome and a sign of friendship. Karens have a sense for the silly and love to tease each other and themselves about obvious traits (falling asleep at lessons, eating lots, being fat) in ways we don't. A gently teasing pantomime worked one day – we arrived and grubby little Moo ran to offer us strawberries: I feign licking one and offering it up with an innocent smile. Mum laughed so hard. Beware Karens may 'laugh at' others to negate embarrassment or even at something violent or traumatic but this does not indicate humour or approval but is a way to letting it be seen as unimportant; making something 'small' or 'making light'. It is good to mirror that grace. Use or be alert to non-verbals, and body language. Read facial expressions to see if people are uncomfortable or tired.
- Body contact within genders can look and feel more intimate than we are accustomed too. A teen may hug her mother, unconcerned if her hand is on her mothers breast. Karens will sit close or even right against you while working on some paperwork – this is not common across genders for Karens or us but as our gender associations seem very open, care may have to be taken to re-clarify your physical space boundaries and the meanings we place on some touches. Meet in the middle with comfort levels and propriety.
- Persist and build on Karen willingness and skills – if they are doing childcare, Sunday school, gardening or cooking these CAN translate into training course/ work that will benefit a whole family. So, see their gifts and encourage them.

WORKING WITH ESL SPEAKERS

- Use simple phrases and repeat with different words. ('Highest level of educational attainment' becomes 'did you go to high school? Did you finish?'). Ask for clarity first in specific ways – ask 'do you know this word?' or 'do you know the insurance premium? The money you pay for car insurance?'. The money you pay to RACT?
- Australian teaching approaches https://www.alea.edu.au/documents/item/551: suggestions include high opportunity for repetition (recycle words), more one-on-one, visual/written resources and work, firm routines - rather than rely on discussion. Do focus on student-produced writing to develop literacy and slow the learning pace.
- A lighter read, with classroom tips : http://www.gettingsmart.com/2016/03/5-best-practices-for-supporting-refugee-ell-students/

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Burma

Burma is a brutal dictatorship that has violently oppressed free speech and ethnic minorities for 5 decades. Burma has a self-serving, punitive military government that targets its own civilians in villages, seizes high-value assets to resource battalions - often conscripted soldiers so undisciplined and use rape as proxy for 'comradery', use sweep and burn to conduct ethnic cleansing – they are called 'peacekeeping forces'; armed ethnic groups are often safer than unarmed groups, especially those living and working near jemstone mines or other assets. Conflict in Burma continues in Kachin and Shan States, in addition to the 660k Rohingya refugees driven from SW Burma to Bangladesh. These Muslim people have been in Burma for decades and are positioned as 'terrorists' – like most refugees, 50% are children

Refugees

Refugees, including displaced persons and asylum seekers are 1 in 113 in the world (under 1% of the world), and only 10% go to other countries. Over 80% go to developing countries and are living near conflict (in Turkey 2.5mil, Pakistan 1.6mil, next most in Lebanon, Iran, Africa – Tanzania, chad and DRC (Refugee Council of Australia 2015 https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getfacts/statistics/unchr2015/; http://www.unhcr.org/464049e711.pdf). The largest single group of refugees are the Rohyinga from Burma now in Bangladesh.

Australians of refugee background are .8% of all refugees globally, and 1 in a thousand people in our nation are refugees (we take about 18k/year now, 57k over ten years). For comparison, Lebanon has 180 per 1 thousand. Places like Manus Island had over a thousand per thousand residents (ratio). The ratio in Australia is generous, but the *burden* per capita is a different matter – for example all European nations are overshadowed by the relative GDP spent on refugees in Tanzania. Also, we lag behind most European nations in terms of refugee *recognition* which is different to resettlement, as we do not recognise (in terms of asylum and rights) many more than we resettle compared to places like Germany (see the ABC Fact Check http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-21/fact-check-george-brandis-refugees-per-capita/9241276). In short, 'hosting' vs 'resettlement' vs 'recognition' and 'inclusion' differ in each country so comparison is difficult. In Australia HE automatically get PR (Permanent Residency is a 2-3 year wait for other migrants), but Humanitarian Entrants still need enough English to pass Citizenship test and be able to travel etc. (other migrants without PR cant work but can travel as they have passports from elsewhere already).

Australia is a bit of a poster child for multiculturalism, however. For example we don't experience the enclaves and riots of London: after the Lint café siege we started the #I'llRideWithYou campaign in solidarity with Muslims and other migrants. One reason is, with 46% OS born (more with parents born OS), many are married to someone from 'elsewhere'. Also, these (newer) Australians are more religious: and more churches/ Christians are non-Western (this is a global trend). Currently, Christianity is growing the fastest in (secular) China. **Tasmania** is only 18% OS born and only 4% speak LOTE at home – bit more in Hobart, but no group is more than 1% (there are 2.2% of all peoples from Asia).

Resettlement is 'contiguous'

Lay Moo came in 2008 but people are coming all the time and at different life stages. People may have fled Burma when they were parents, or as teens or babies. They reach camps at different life stages so are impacted differently by the lack of food, security, education and work. Karens reach third countries after about ten years in a refugee camp so that may be their childbearing years, their teens, or their whole childhood and all they have ever known.

What about integration?

Large numbers of Dutch resettlers to Kingston and areas of Southern Tasmania after the war were not accepted by the community, so can not be said to have 'integrated'. Interestingly, the Christians were most active in teaching and keeping their own language, and so formed their own schools and the reformed churches in the south that still exist today (see Julian 1989). The non-Christian Dutch, however, shed their culture and language and assimilated far more quickly (for example, altering their name) in order to secure jobs. A person with Dutch heritage in Tasmania still faces assumptions about their family size and other preferences, but the Dutch have assimilated, leaving a permanent heritage within Kingstons fine institutions.

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Other questions, queries or comments please feel free to email me:
Rebekah.Brown@utas.edu.au

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Participant Information Sheet [Ethics Application H14292 Appendix A]

Interacting with the Karen community living in Tasmania.

Information sheet for participants

1. Invitation

As a community person who supports or is familiar with the Karen community in Tasmania, you are invited to participate in this study at an interview, with some follow-up conversations. I am Rebekah, a student at the University of Tasmania, and am interested in the resettlement of the Karen. This study is my PhD research project and I am supervised by Associate Professor Roberta Julian, and Professor Keith Jacobs. Keith and Roberta are both senior social scientists at the University of Tasmania (Sandy Bay).

2. What are the purposes of this study?

a. The purpose of this research is to explore the resettlement experiences of the Karen through your memories and/or current experiences of particular events, and interactions with the Karen since their arrival in 2008.
b. The study includes the Karen peoples' journey as refugees, but focuses on their resettlement as families, and their life as a part of the Tasmanian community.
c. The aim is to better understand how Karen cultural and religious practices may have shaped their resettlement, and their interactions with you and other non-Karen.
d. I am also interested in any actions or omission you consider significant to smooth transitions, 'success' or otherwise of the Karen resettlement experience.

3. Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been approached about participation due to your long or significant interaction with the Tasmanian Karen. Your participation is voluntary, which means you only take part if you want to, and can withdraw or modify any of your comments at any time.

4. What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to an interview or feedback session, with possible follow up questions and conversation including email, with your ongoing consent. In the event we have spoken about the research already and information has been shared, this consent form is a way for our prior conversations and your valuable insights to be included in the research findings.

5. Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

The personal benefits of being involved in this study are limited, but many find contributing to, and sharing knowledge enjoyable and valuable. There may be no direct benefits to the community from this research beyond sharing knowledge, and celebrating and acknowledging the actions of individuals and communities. This research will produce reports of an academic nature Other reports will be of value to the broader community and service providers, informing them of the successes and challenges of refugee resettlement.

6. Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

As this research is conducted in a small community, it is likely your participation in the research will not be confidential, although the details you provide will be aggregated with other findings. The focus is on Karen resettlement, and 'successful' multicultural interactions,

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and the purpose is to show features of faith communities and other actions which have had a positive impact on Karen resettlement. Each interview participant will be identified only as a church member, or – if necessary – part of the leadership team. This means individuals are not re-identifiable by their unique role. The research reports use 'Tasmania', and de-identify the city and church denomination, due to the small size of the State and the relative vulnerability of refugee-background participants, who have sensitive political histories.

As participation in this research involves talking about a group with a difficult background, from a very different culture, who face some disadvantages, this may cause some sad or upset feelings. It is not anticipated that these will be significant nor cause unusual distress. While I am interested in the successes *and* challenges of interacting with the Karen, please feel free to direct the interview away from any very uncomfortable issues.

If you or someone in your group does become distressed as a result of participation, or after that, you may wish to access counseling services. You are able to do this without needing to contact the University by calling Life Line on 13 11 14. Life Line is a telephone support service where you can speak to someone neutral about your emotions.

7. What if I change my mind during or after the study?

You and your family are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and you can do so without providing an explanation. If this is the case, recorded conversations can be erased. It is not always possible to take stories out once the study is published, as no names will be used throughout the research. The study will begin to be published from December 2017.

8. What will happen to the information when this study is over?

The recordings, any photographs and notes of the study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or password-protected laptop at the university, and only the research team has access to it.

9. How will the results of the study be published?

The study findings will be published in academic journals and plain-language summaries or feedback sessions will also be distributed with involved networks, and to local service providers. Interviewees can request access to these reports, and ask questions via email.

10. What if I have questions about this study?

If you have any questions, you can speak to Rebekah any time by calling her on 0408 322 567 or email Rebekah.Brown@utas.edu.au. You can also call others in the research team; Roberta Julian 6226 2217, and Keith Jacobs 6226 2928.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 6254 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Ethics ref: H14292.

This information sheet is for you to keep. You can show that you freely agree to participate in this study by signing the consent form, which Rebekah will give to you.

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Participant Consent Form [version 8, January 2017]

Interacting with the Karen people living in Tasmania

Dear participant,

This form for ensure you give your time voluntarily to hear from and speak to Rebekah for the purposes of research.

1. I agree to take part in the research study named above.
2. I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this study.
3. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
4. I understand that the study involves an interview or feedback session with possible follow-up conversations and questions. With the consent of all participants, conversations may be audio recorded so Rebekah can remember detail accurately, but recordings will be kept secure and private.
5. I understand that participation involves the risk that talking about the Karen and my interactions with them may cause some negative feelings, and if I do feel upset I have been given a phone number to call (on the information sheet).
6. I understand that in reports and information made available to the public information will be aggregated and I will be de-identified with a false name, for example all non-Karen participants will be referred to as a member of the church or community, or member of the leadership team – where necessary for clarity - rather than by individual role. I understand that Rebekah will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to her will be used only for the purposes of the research.
7. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without any effect. If you change your mind or have any questions just ask Rebekah.

   I understand that I may request that any data I have supplied (any videos, recordings of conversations or photographs) be withdrawn from the research until it is published in from December 2017.

Participant's name: _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

☐ I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name: _____

Investigator's signature: _____

Date: _____

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Participant Information Sheet [Ethics Application H14292 Appendix A]

တၢ်ဆဲးတၢ်လၢ ဘဉ်တၢ်ဒုးနဲဉ်ဖျါထိဉ်–တၢ်ဖိတၢ်လံၤ လၢ တၢ်ဘဉ်သူဉ်ဘဉ်သးအိၤ တဖဉ်ဒီးလုၢ်လၢ်ထူသနူအရှဒိဉ် လၢ ပှၤ ကညီလၢ အအိဉ်လၢ ဟိဘးတဖဉ်အဂီၢ်

တၢ်ဂ့ၢ်တၢ်ကျိၤ အလံာ်ကွ့လၢ ပှၤ နှာ်လီၤ ဟ်ဃုာ်တဖဉ်အဂီၢ်

၁) တၢ်ကွဲမှာ်

ဒ်နမ့ၢ်ပှၤ တဂၤ လၢ အဘဉ်ထွဲဒီးပှၤ ကညီအတ၊ လၢ ဟိဘးအပူၤ အသိး.နဘဉ်တၢ်ကွဲမှာ်နၤ လၢ နကနှာ်လီၤ ဟ်ဃုာ်လၢ တၢ်မၤ လိတခါအံၤ အပူၤ လီၤ.ယမံၤ မ့ၢ်ရံဉ်ဘဲးခဉ်.မ့ၢ်ကွိဖိတဂၤ လၢ ထဲးစမ့နယါဖွဉ်စိမိၤ ဒီးယသူဉ်စဲသးစဲလၢ ကညီတၢ်ဆဲးတၢ်လၢ လီၤ ဆိဒဉ်တၢ်,တၢ်ပီးတၢ်လိတဖဉ်ဒီးလုၢ်လၢ်ထူသနူလၢ တၢ်ညီနၢ်မၤ အိၤ တဖဉ်လၢ အရှဒိဉ်လၢ နပှၤ တဂ၊ အပူၤ လီၤ. တၢ်မၤ လိတခါအံၤ မ့ၢ်ယဒီးကထ၊ ဉ်ဒိဉ်အတၢ်လၢ ကပိၤ အဂိၢ်အတၢ်ယိထံသ့ဉ်ညါ အတၢ်ရဲဉ် တၢ်ကျဲၤ ဒီးယဘဉ်တၢ်ဟံးစုနဲဉ်ယၤ လၢ ဖွဉ်စိမိၤ သရဉ်မၤ သကိးတၢ် ရိဉ်ဘ၊ ထဉ် ကွူလံယၤ ဉ်နှ် ဒီး ဖွဉ်စိမိၤ သရဉ်ဒိဉ်စိ ခံးသံကွခီးဘ် တဖဉ်နှဉ်လီၤ. ခံးသံ ဒီးရိဉ်ဘ၊ ထဉ်တဖဉ်မ့ၢ်ပှၤ ဂ့ၢ်ဝိစဲအ့ဉ်ဖိလိၢ်လံၤ တဖဉ်လၢ အမၤ တၢ်လၢ ထဲးစမ့နယါဖွဉ်စိမိၤ လီၤ.

၂) တၢ်မၤ လိတခါအံၤ အတၢ်ပညိဉ်မ့ၢ်မနုၤ လဲဉ်.

၁. တၢ်ကနၢ်ဟူဘဉ်ကညီလၢ အအိဉ်လၢ ဟိဘးတဖဉ်တၢ်သူဉ်ဝံဉ်သးဆ၊ တဖဉ်ဒီးတၢ်တဲတဖဉ်လီၤ.
ယအဲဉ်ဒီးယုသ့ဉ်ညါတၢ်ဆဲးတၢ်လၢ၊ အတၢ်ဟူးတၢ်ဂဲၤ ဒီးပှၤ ကညီလၢ အအိဉ်တ့ၢ်လံလၢ ထဲးစမ့နယါလၢ အပူၤ ကွံာ်သ၊ နံဉ်တဖဉ်လၢ တၢ်ကနီၤ ဟ့ဉ်လီၤ အတၢ်လဲၤ ခီဖျိဘဉ်ဃးပှၤ တ၊ ဒီးက့ၢ်ပနိဉ်လၢ ကျဲလၢ အဝဲသ့ဉ်နၢ်ပၢၢ်ဝဲအသိးန္ဉ်လီၤ.

၂. လၢ ကကွၢ်နီၢ်တဂၤ ဒီးတၢ်ဆဲးတၢ်လၢ၊ အပနိဉ်လၢ တၢ်မၤ ကဲထိဉ်အိၤ တဖဉ်(ဟ်ဃုာ်တၢ်ဂီၤ တဖဉ်.တၢ်ကူတၢ်သိးတဖဉ်မ့တမ့ၢ်ဟံဉ်ပူၤ ယိပူၤ အပိးအလိတဖဉ်)ဒီးလၢ ကျဲဒ်လဲဉ်တၢ်သ့ဉ်တဖဉ်အံၤ နဲဉ်ဖျါထိဉ်တၢ်ဂ့ၢ်အရှဒိဉ်ဒီးပှၤ ကညီဖိတဖဉ်အတၢ်လဲၤ ကျဲဒ်ပှၤ ဘဉ်ကိဘဉ်ခဲ, တၢ်သူဉ်ထိဉ်ဆိလီၤ အသးဒ်ဟံဉ်ဖိယိဖိတဖဉ်ဒီးတၢ်အိဉ်မူလၢ အဘဉ်ထွဲဒီးထဲးစမ့နယါအပှၤ တဝ၊ အသိးန္ဉ်လီၤ.

၃. လၢ တၢ်ကနၢ်ပၢၢ်တၢ်အရှဒိဉ်ဘဉ်ဃးပှၤ ကညီအကူအသိးလၢ ပျၢၤ လၢ နိၢ်တဂၤ အဂိၢ်ဒီးလၢ ပှၤ ကညီကလုာ်ဒူဉ်အက့ၢ်ပနိဉ်အဂိၢ်ဒ်လဲဉ်နှဉ်လီၤ.

၃) ဘဉ်မနုၤ အဃိယဘဉ်တၢ်ကွဲမှာ်ယၤ လၢ ယကနှာ်လီၤ ဟ်ဃုာ်လဲဉ်.

နၤ (ဒီးနဟံဉ်ဖိယိဖိတနီၤ စ့ၢ်ကီး)ဘဉ်တၢ်သုးဘူးသးဆူသုအိဉ်ဘဉ်ဃးတၢ်နှာ်လီၤ ဟ်ဃုာ်ခီဖျိသုမ့ၢ်ပှၤ ကညီအတ၊ ဖိဒီးအိဉ်တ့ၢ်လံလၢ ထဲးစမ့နယါအပူၤ အါန့ၢ်သ၊ နံဉ်လံအယိလီၤ. ပကန့ၢ်ထံဉ်လိာ်သးခီဖျိသမူသကိးတနီၤ.မ့တမ့ၢ်ပှၤ တနီၤ လၢ အဟဲထိဉ်ဟိဘးဘျ၊ ထံသရိဉ်လၢ ကလံၤ စိးန္ဉ်လီၤ.

နတၢ်နှာ်လီၤ ဟ်ဃုာ်အံၤ မ့ၢ်တၢ်မှာ်သးမၤ ကလိ,အခိပညိန္ဉ်နမ့ၢ်အဲဉ်ဒီးမးနနှာ်လီၤ ဟ်ဃုာ်သ့ဒီးနအိဉ်ပတုာ်သ့ကိးကတိၢ်ဒဲးလီၤ. တၢ်ဟ်ဃုာ်ဟ်ဂိၢ် လၢ တၢ်မၤ လိအံၤ.မ့တမ့ၢ်နဆ၊ တဲာ်လၢ နလိဉ်အိဉ်ပတုာ်အံၤ တဘျးလိာ်အသး ဒီးနတၢ်ရူလိာ်မှာ်လိာ်ဒီးဖွဉ်စိမိၤ ဘဉ်. တၢ်မၤ စ၊ တခါလ်လ်လ၊ တၢ်ဟ့ဉ်နၤ တဖဉ်အံၤ ကဘဉ်တၢ်ဟ့ဉ်နၤ ဆူညါဒ်ညီနှၢ်အသိးလီၤ.

၄) ယကဘဉ်တၢ်မ၊ ယမၤ မနုၤ လဲဉ်.

ယသးစဲဝဲဒဉ်လ၊ ကညီတၢ်ဆဲးတၢ်လၢ ဒီးတၢ်အံၤ လၢ ကျဲဒ်လဲဉ်ဆိတလဲအသးစးထိဉ်လ၊ နဟဲဆူထဲးစမ့နယါအခါန္ဉ်လဲဉ်. အခိဉ်ထံးန္ဉ်, ယအဲဉ်ဒီးလ၊ နတဲဘဉ်ယၤ ဘဉ်ဃးနဂ့ၢ်နကျိၤ ဘဉ်ဃးနတၢ်အိဉ်မူမၤ တ့ၢ်အသးဒ်လဲဉ်စးထိဉ်လ၊ နဟဲဆူထဲးစမ့နယါအခါလံၤ လံၤ နှဉ်လီၤ. ယအဲဉ်ဒီးမၤ ကဲထိဉ်တၢ်ဂီၤ မူဘဉ်ဃးတၢ်တဲတခါအံၤ.ဃုာ်ဒီးနတၢ်ပျဲန္ဉ်လီၤ. ဝံသးစူၤ တဲဘဉ်နဂ့ၢ်နကျိၤ အတၢ်တဲလ၊ ကညီစ့ၢ်ၤ ကျိာ်တက့ၢ်. တလိဉ်နတဲ အဲးကလံးအကျိာ်ဘဉ်. နတဲဘဉ်တၢ်တဲတခါအံၤ ဖဲတၢ်ဟဲဟ်ဖြဉ်ထိဉ်သးလ၊ နဟံဉ်.မ့တမ့ၢ်ဖဲနထိဉ်ဟိဘးဘျ၊ ထံသရိဉ်လ၊ က လံၤ စိးအခါဘဉ် တဘဉ်နအဲဉ်ဒီးတဲနဂ့ၢ်နကျိၤ မ့တမ့ၢ်လ၊ ပှၤ တဝ၊ အတၢ်ဟ်ဖြဉ်ထိဉ်သး လ၊ အဂၤ တခါန္ဉ်လီၤ. ယကသံကွၢ်နၤ ဒီးနဟံဉ်ဖိယိဖိလ၊ နကတဲဘဉ်ယၤ ဘဉ် ယးနထူသနူတၢ်ကူတၢ်ကၤ.ဒီးတၢ်အိဉ်မူအကျိၤ အကျဲတဖဉ်လီၤ. ယအဲဉ်ဒီးလ၊ နတဲဘဉ်ယၤ ဘဉ်ဃးတၢ်ကဲပှၤ ကညီ,ဒီးလ၊ ကျဲဒ်လဲဉ်လ၊ နသ့ဉ်နိဉ် နမ့ၢ်ကညီဖိ, ဒီးလ၊ ကျဲဒ်လဲဉ်အမ့ၢ်တၢ်တမံၤ ယိမ့တမ့ၢ်တၢ်လီၤ ဆိဒီးတၢ်လ၊ အပူၤ ကွံာ်,ဖဲအိဉ်လ၊ ကိၢ်ပယီၤ အခါမ့တမ့ၢ်အိဉ်လ၊ ထံဂ့ၤ ကိၢ်ဂၤ ဒ် ယိၤ ကိၢ်အသိးန္ဉ်လီၤ. ဒ်နှဉ်အသိး,ယကသံကွၢ်နၤ လ၊ နကတဲဘဉ်ဃးလ၊ ကျဲဒ်လဲဉ်နဉ်းနဲဉ်ပှၤ တဝ၊ လ၊ နမ့ၢ်ပှၤ ကညီ–ဘဉ်တဘဉ်တၢ်အံၤ ခီဖျိ နတၢ်ကူတၢ်သိးလ၊ ပျၢၤ.မ့တမ့ၢ်ခီဖျိတၢ်အိဉ်မူအကျဲကပူၤ လ၊ အရှဒိဉ်အဂၤ အဒိဒ်နတၢ်သူဉ်ဝံဉ်သးဆ၊ မ့တမ့ၢ်တၢ်အိဉ်သကိးတၢ်အိဉ်တၢ်အိတပူၤ ယိန္ဉ်လီၤ.

အဂၤ တမံၤ.ယအဲဉ်ဒီးတဲတၢ်ဒီးနၤ အသိတဘျိလ၊ နဟံဉ်လီၤ. ပကတဲသကိးနတၢ်တဲဘဉ်ဃးနဂ့ၢ်နကျိၤ အံၤ တပူၤ ယိ,လ၊ အဲးကလံးအကျိာ်,မ့တမ့ၢ်လ၊ ကညီကျိာ်ယုာ်ဒီးပှၤ ကျိာ်ထံတၢ်ဖဲန္ဉ်လီၤ. ယကသံကွၢ်နၤ တၢ်သံကွၢ်ဘဉ်ဃးနတၢ်ဆဲးတၢ်လ၊ ဒီးဘဉ်ဃးနဂ့ၢ်နကျိၤ အတၢ်တဲန္ဉ်လီၤ. နမ့ၢ်

အ၊ ဉ်လီ၊ တူ၊်လိ်ာ်,ယကဒိန္ဒ်ပှ၊ ကညီအကူအသိးဒိးတ၊်ပိးတ၊်လိအဂ၊ တဖဉ်လ၊ နဆိက မိဉ်အရ္ဒဒိဉ်တဖဉ်အဂိ၊်လီ၊. ယကဖိဉ်ယာ်ပတ၊်တဲသကိး တ၊်အကလုး်မ့၊်ဒ်သိးယကသ့ဉ်နိဉ်တ၊်လ၊ အဘဉ်တ၊်တဲတ့၊် တဖဉ်ဒိးသူအီ၊ လ၊ တ၊်ဃုသ့ဉ်ညါမ၊ လိအပူ၊ လီ၊. ယကကနဉ်က့၊ လိယဲ၊ ကွိ၊ လ၊ တ၊် ဖိဉ်ယာ်တ၊်ကလု၊်အံ၊ တဖဉ်,ဒိးကွဲးဖုဉ်လီ၊ က့၊ အီ၊ ဘဉ်ယးတ၊်လ၊ ပတဲတ့၊်အီ၊ တဖဉ်မ့၊်တ၊်မနှ၊ လဲဉ်နှဉ်လီ၊. ယကဟဲအိဉ်သ ကိးန၊ အသိတ ဘျိက ဒိး,လ၊ တ၊်ကမ၊ လီ၊ တံ၊်တ၊်ကွဲးဖုဉ်လီ၊ အံ၊ တခါအံ၊ ဒိးန၊ မ၊ လီ၊ တံ၊်တ၊်အံ၊ မ့၊်တ၊်လ၊ နအဲဉ်ဒိးတဲအီ၊ ,ဒိးတ၊်အဂ၊ လ၊ နအဲဉ်ဒိးဟ်ဖြဉ်အါထိဉ် အိဉ်ဒံး တမံ၊ မံ၊ ဓါနှဉ်လီ၊. ဖဲပတဲတ၊်အခါ,နမ၊ တ၊်အိဉ်ဖြဉ်သရဉ်,မ့တမ့၊်နသကိးတဂ၊ မ့တမ့၊်ပှ၊ အဂ၊ တဖဉ်လ၊ နဟံဉ်ဖိယိဖိအပူ၊ လ၊ အကတိ၊ အဲးကလံး ကျိဉ်သ့ဘျဲးဘျဲးဘျိးဘျိးအိဉ်ဒိးန၊ သ့,မ့၊်ဒ်သိးယကန၊်ပ၊်နတ၊်တဲအံ၊ ကသ့အဂိ၊်လီ၊. နမ့၊်အဲဉ်ဒိး,ပကိးန့၊်ပှ၊ ကျိးထံတ၊်အတ၊်ဖံးတ၊်မ၊ လ၊ လိတဲ စိအပူ၊ ဒိးအဝဲသ့ဉ်ကမ၊ စ၊၊ ပှ၊ လ၊ တ၊်ကန၊်ပ၊်ကညီဒိးအဲးကလံးကျိဉ်နှဉ်လီ၊.

**၅) တ၊်ဘျူးတ၊်ဖြဉ်တဖဉ်လ၊ တ၊်နှာ်လီ၊ ဟ်ဃုာ်လ၊ တ၊်မ၊ လိတခါအံ၊ အပူ၊ အံ၊ ဘဉ်ထွဲဒိးတ၊်တဲဘဉ်န ဂ့၊်နကျိ၊ တဖဉ်လ၊ ပှ၊ အါဂ၊ ကထံဉ်နှ၊်ဝဲလ၊ ဘဉ်အသးမ့ာ်ဒိးအလု၊်အမှ၊ အိဉ်နှဉ်လီ၊. တ၊်ဘျူးတ၊်ဖြဉ်လီ၊ လီ၊ ပှ၊ တ၀၊ အဂိ၊်လ၊ အဟဲထိဉ်လ၊ တ၊်ဃုသ့ဉ်ညါတခါအံ၊ အပူ၊ ဘဉ်တဘဉ်တအိဉ်ဝဲဘဉ်သနာ်က့လ၊ ကျဲတဘိမ့၊်တ၊်မ၊ လ၊ ကပီ၊ နထူသနူတ၊်ဆဲးတ၊်လ၊ ဒိးထုးထိဉ်ဒုးနဲဉ်အီ၊ ဆူဟိဘးပှ၊ တ၀၊ အအိဉ်လီ၊. ဘဉ်တဘဉ်အဘျူးအဖြဉ်ကအိဉ်ဝဲလ၊ ပှ၊ တ၀၊ အဂုဂ၊ အဂ၊ တဖဉ်အဂိ၊်လ၊ အကမ၊ လိန္ဒ်ပှ၊ ကညီဖိတဖဉ်အတ၊်လဲ၊ ခိဖျိဒိးသ့ဉ်ညါဟ်ပနိဉ်အတ၊်ဘဉ်ထွဲ,လီ၊ ပလိာ်သးတဖဉ်ဆူညါနှဉ်လီ၊.

ပှ၊ တဂ၊ စုာ်စုာ်လ၊ အတဲဘဉ်အဂ့၊်အကျိ၊ တ၊်တဲတဖဉ်တ၊်ကဟ့ဉ်အီ၊ တ၊်အဘူးအလဲလ၊ အက့၊် အဂိ၊ လ၊ အမ့၊်စ့၂၀ဒိလဉ်နှဉ်လီ၊. တ၊်အံ၊ မ့၊်တ၊်မ၊ နှ၊်တူ၊်လိာ်နတ၊်ဆ၊ ကတိ၊်ဒိး"တ၊်စံးဘျူးစံးဖြဉ်က့၊ နှ၊"နှဉ်လီ၊. နမ့၊်အဲဉ်ဒိးတဲဘဉ်အါထိဉ်ယ၊ ဘဉ်ယးတ၊်တဲအံ၊ လ၊ ခံတခီ, တ၊်အံ၊ ကဘဉ် တ၊်ကျိးထံအီ၊ ဆူအဲးကလံးအကျိဉ်ဒိးယကသံကွ၊်နှ၊ တ၊်သံကွ၊်တနှိ၊ ဘဉ်ယးဒိးတ၊်အံ၊ လ၊ တ၊်သံကွ၊်စံးဆ၊ တခါအပူ၊,ဒိးဟ့ဉ်အါထိဉ်နှ၊ စ့၂၀ဒိလဉ်လ၊ နဟ့ဉ်နတ၊်ဆ၊ ကတိ၊်အယိလီ၊. တ၊်သးဝံဉ်တဖျ၊ဉ်မ့၊်ဘဉ်တ၊်ဟ့ဉ်အီ၊ လ၊ ကရ္ဒါတခီ,စ့၂၀ဒိလဉ်အံ၊ ကဘဉ်တ၊်ဟ့ဉ်အီ၊ ဆူပှ၊ ကိးဂ၊ ဒဲးလ၊ ခွါယ၊ဉ်အပူ၊ အဂိ၊်လီ၊. ယကဟ့ဉ်နှ၊ တ၊်ဂိ၊ မူအဒိတဘ့ဉ်လ၊ နကဟ်ယာ်အီ၊ ,ဒိးတ၊်အံ၊ နနှိ၊ ကွ၊်အီ၊ ဒိးနပှ၊ တ၀၊ သ့လီ၊.

၆) တ၊်ကိတ၊်ခဲလ၊ အကဲထိဉ်သ့ခီဖြိတ၊်နှာ်လီ၊ ဟ်ဃုာ်လ၊ တ၊်မ၊ လိတခါအံ၊ အပူ၊ အိဉ်တမံ၊ မံ၊ ဓါ.

ဒ်တ၊်နှာ်လီ၊ ဟ်ဃုာ်လ၊ တ၊်ဃုသ့ဉ်ညါတခါအံ၊ နှဉ်ဟ်ဃုာ်တ၊်တဲဘဉ်ဃးနထူသနူတ၊်ဆဲးတ၊်လ၊ ဒိးတ၊်အိဉ်မူအိဉ်ဂဲ၊ ,တ၊်ကိတ၊်ခဲလ၊ တ၊်တဲဘဉ်ဃးနတ၊်အိဉ်မူလ၊ အပူ၊ ကွံာ်ဒိးအခဲအံ၊ ဘဉ်တဘဉ်ကဒုးကဲတ၊်သူဉ်တမုာ်သးတမုာ်တနှိ၊ မ့တမ့၊်တ၊်တူ၊်ဘဉ်လ၊ အတမုာ်တဖဉ်နှဉ်လီ၊.တ၊်အံ၊ မ့၊်ဝဲဘဉ်ဝဲလ၊ တ၊်ဃုသ့ဉ်ညါအံ၊ အဂိ၊်ဘဉ်ဆဉ်တ၊်အိဉ်သးအိဉ်ဝဲလ၊ ဘဉ်တဘဉ်ကမ့၊်သးအတ၊်သးဂဲ၊ လ၊ ယဂိ၊်တဘျိတခိဉ်နှဉ်လီ၊. ရံဉ်ဘဲးခဉ်သူဉ်စဲသးစဲဒိးနထူသနူတ၊်ဆဲးတ၊်လ၊ ဒိးနတ၊်အိဉ်မူအခဲအံ၊ လ၊ ထဲးစမ့နယါ,ဒိးအယိတ၊်သံကွ၊်တဖဉ်ကဘဉ်ထွဲဒိးတ၊်ဂ့၊်သ့ဉ်တဖဉ်အံ၊ အါန့၊်တ၊်အဂ၊ ဒ်တ၊်သံကွ၊်ဝဲဒဉ်တ၊်ဂ့၊်တ၊်ကျိ၊ လီ၊ တံ၊်အါအါဂိ၊်ဘဉ်ယးထံရူ၊်ကိ၊်သဲးအတ၊်အိဉ်မူမ့တမ့၊်ကမျ၊်တ၊်သဘံဉ်သဘ့ဉ်လ၊ ကိ၊်ပယီ၊ အပူ၊ လီ၊.

နှ၊ မ့တမ့၊်ပှ၊ တဂ၊ ဂ၊ လ၊ နဟံဉ်ဖိယိဖိအကျါအိဉ်ထိဉ်ဒိးတ၊်ကိ၊်တ၊်ဂိ၊ ခိဖျိအတ၊်နှာ်လီ၊ ဟ်ဃုာ်အယိ,မ့တမ့၊်လ၊ အလိ၊်ခံဒိးနဆ၊ မုာ်လ၊်မ၊ နှ၊်သးတ၊်ကူစါယါအတ၊်မ၊ စ၊၊ အတ၊်ဖံးတ၊်မ၊ သ့ လီ၊. နမ၊ တ၊်အံ၊ သ့ဒိးတလိဉ်နဆဲးကျိးဖွဉ်စိမိ၊ ခိဖျိတ၊်ကိးဝဲဒဉ်လိတဲစိသမူအကျိ၊ လ၊ 13 11 14 နှဉ်လီ၊. အံ၊ မ့၊်လိတဲစိအတ၊်ဆိဉ်ထွဲမ၊ စ၊၊ တ၊်အတ၊်ဖံးတ၊်မ၊ ဖဲနကတိ၊ တ၊်ဒိးပှ၊ တဂ၊ ဂ၊ ဘဉ်ယးနသးအတ၊်တူ၊်ဘဉ်တဖဉ်အံ၊ နှဉ်သ့လီ၊. နဆဲးကျိးစ့၊်ကိးအဲဉ်မဉ်စံဉ်(MRC) လ၊ ဟိဘးအပူ၊ သ့ဝဲလ၊ တ၊်ကမ၊ နှ၊်ကသံဉ်သရဉ်အတ၊်ဆ့၊ ယီ၊ နှ၊ ဆူသးတ၊်ကူစါယါဘျါသရဉ်အအိဉ်လ၊ အအိဉ်လ၊ ဖိန်းစ်အလိ၊်ခ၊ဉ် သးလ၊ လိတဲစိနိ၊်ဂံ၊် 6221 0999နှဉ်တက့၊်. ဒ်နှဉ်အသိး,စဲထ၊ ဉ်ခဲရ် (Centercare)ဟ့ဉ်စ့၊်ကိးသးတ၊်ကူစါယါဘျါဒိး အဂ၊ တဖဉ်မ၊ စ၊၊ ပှ၊ လ၊ အသုးအိဉ် ဆိးလိ၊်ကျဲတဖဉ်ဒိးအဝဲသ့ဉ်အလိတဲစိနိ၊်ဂံ၊်မ့၊်ဝဲ 6278 1660 နှဉ်လီ၊.

၇) အဒိယမ့၊်ဆီတလဲယသးဖဲတ၊်မ၊ လိအဆ၊ ကတိ၊်မ့တမ့၊်လ၊ တ၊်မ၊ လိဝံ၊ အလိ၊်ခံမီ၊.

နဒိးနဟံဉ်ဖိယိဖိတဖဉ်အိဉ်ဒိးတ၊်သဘျလ၊ နကထုးကွံာ်နသးလ၊ တ၊်မ၊ လိတခါအံ၊ အပူ၊ သ့ကိးကတိ၊်ဒဲး,ဒိးနမ၊ တ၊်အံ၊ သ့ဒိးတလိဉ်နဟ့ဉ်တ၊်ဂ့၊်တ၊်ကျိ၊ ဘဉ်ယးဘဉ်မနှ၊ အယိနဟး ထိဉ်ကွံာ်အဂ့၊်ဘဉ်. နမ့၊်အဲဉ်ဒိးအိဉ်ပတုာ်,တ၊်တဲသကိးလ၊ တ၊်ဖိဉ်ယာ်အကလု၊်တဖဉ်ကဘဉ်တ၊်ထူးသံကွံာ်အီ၊ ဒိးနတ၊်တဲတဖဉ်အံ၊ ကဘဉ်တ၊်ထုးကွံာ်အီ၊ လ၊ တ၊်မ၊ လိအံ၊ အပူ၊ လီ၊. တ၊်တဲတဖဉ်အံ၊ တ၊်မ့၊်ထုးထိဉ်ရ၊ လီ၊ လံတဘျိတ၊် ကထုးကွံာ်အဂိ၊် ကဲထိဉ်တသ့လ၊၊ ဘဉ်ဒိးမံ၊ ကအိဉ်ဖျါလ၊ တ၊်ထုးထိဉ်ရ၊ လီ၊ အပူ၊ လီ၊. တ၊်မ၊ လိအံ၊ တ၊်ကစးထိဉ်ထုးထိဉ်ရ၊ လီ၊ အီ၊ စးထိဉ်လါနိဉ်ဝ့ဘ၊ ဉ်၂၀၁၆နံဉ်နှဉ်လီ၊.